



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

# J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics Year in Review 2025 Edition



For the Public Good

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# A School of Business and Economics for the Public Good

## Dean's Message

### Dear colleagues, partners, and friends of the School,

It is a privilege to write my first message as Dean of the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics. I'd like to begin by thanking Professor Jonathan Levie for his steady leadership as Acting Dean and our colleagues across the School for their commitment to students, scholarship, and engagement.

By way of introduction, I join Galway as Established Professor of Innovation and Strategic Management. My work examines innovation, strategy, and technology-enabled organisational change, with recent projects on green innovation and organisational resilience. Previously, I served as Professor and Associate Dean at Durham University Business School, and I have led externally funded research and industry collaborations that connect scholarship with practice.

This past year has brought meaningful momentum. We were shortlisted for Best Business School at the *THE Awards 2025*; achieved Athena Swan Silver; strengthened our accreditations and recognitions (AACSB, AMBA, EFMD); welcomed a vibrant, international community of 2,600+ students and a growing cohort of international staff; and showcased our impact through the University of Galway Business Summit, the award-winning Tax Clinic, and research recognised on the world stage. These results speak to a School that educates with purpose and partners for public good.

Looking forward, my focus is to build on these strengths while advancing a clear direction: by

2030, a triple-accredited school, recognised among Europe's Top 100, known for responsible business thought and practice – shaping future business minds and enhancing economic wellbeing. To that end, we will deepen partnerships with business, policymakers, and civil society; strengthen our research power and visibility by supporting publication in leading international journals and growing citation impact; embed AI across curriculum with an emphasis on ethics and real-world application; enhance student outcomes through industry-embedded projects, internships, and international partnerships; and expand co-created Executive Education and Undergraduate offerings, informed by learner, employer, and societal needs.

Equally, our culture underpins our success. We will continue to champion equity, diversity, and inclusion; support academic and professional staff to thrive; and strengthen transparent, collegial ways of working – a place where collaboration thrives, ideas are tested rigorously, and our economic and societal impact is tangible.

Thank you for your continued engagement with our School. I look forward to working with you in the year ahead.

**Professor Karena Yan**  
Dean, J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics, University of Galway



## How to engage with us.

- Internships
- Partnerships & Collaborations
- Student Prizes & Awards
- Guest Talks & Masterclasses
- Scholarships
- Summer Schools

Stay connected with us for the latest updates, insights, and enjoyable content that showcases our School, events, programmes, alumni success, student stories, and vibrant community.

Contact us at [business@universityofgalway.ie](mailto:business@universityofgalway.ie)

### Follow us

- @universityofgalwaybusiness
- @uniofgalwaybusiness
- University of Galway – J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics
- University of Galway – J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics
- @uniofgalwaybusiness
- @CairnesUniversityofGalway

# Our School Key Facts and Figures



**190**

Academic and  
Professional  
Services Staff



**2,600+**

Students



**50+**

Nationalities



**250+**

Work Placement  
Partners



**100+**

International  
Partners



**30+**

Programmes



**1**

Institute

**6**

Research  
Centres

**€12.6m**

research funding  
in the last six years

# Accreditations and Rankings



Ranked in the

**Top 100**

QS Europe  
University  
Rankings



IMPACT RANKING 2025  
1<sup>ST</sup> IN IRELAND  
64<sup>TH</sup> IN THE WORLD

Top 2%  
of universities in the  
QS World rankings



*In 2023*

University of Galway  
designated a national



**SDG Champion**



# External Advisory Board

## International Deans Advisory Panel Members



**Professor Michael Page**  
Acting Director of Northern and Western Regional Assembly



**Professor Eleanor Shaw**  
Associate Principal/ PVC External Engagement & Partnerships, University of Strathclyde



**Professor Houmin Yan**  
Dean of Business, Chair Professor of Management Sciences, City University of Hong Kong



**Professor Jonathan Doh**  
Professor and Rammrath Chair in International Business, Senior Associate Dean for Research, Faculty, and Global Engagement, Villanova University



**Professor Christos Tsinopoulos**  
Professor, Chair in Operations and Project Management, Dean of Faculty, Royal Holloway University of London



**Professor Jean Chen**  
Chair in Accounting and Financial Management, Kent Business School, University of Kent



**Professor Eddy Fang**  
Professor in the Department of Intelligent Operations and Marketing, Dean of the International Business School Suzhou (IBSS), Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU)

## Internationalisation Advisory Panel Members



**Anne O'Riordan**  
Board Member, Jazz Pharmaceuticals



**Stuart Tait**  
Head of Commercial Banking, HSBC UK



**Arinjoy Dhar**  
Senior Director of Microfinance, BRAC



**Satya Tripathi**  
Secretary-General, Global Alliance for a Sustainable Planet



**Steven Yong**  
HR Director Operations, COO, ASEAN ANZ, HSBC



**Eileen O'Mara**  
Chief Revenue Officer, Stripe



**Richard Chambers**  
Partner, Goldman Sachs



**Bernard Birkett**  
Served as Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of West Pharmaceutical Services, Inc. 2018–2025



**Orla Graham**  
Chief People Officer, Davy



**Orla Good**  
Commercial Director, Portwest



**Paul Kenny**  
CEO – ODLA, Investor, Digital Transformation



**Eid Albogami**  
PMO General Director, Aseer Development Authority

# Welcome to Our New Staff

## Regional Advisory Panel Board Members



**Conall McGettigan**  
Acting Director of  
Northern and Western  
Regional Assembly



**Anne Grealish**  
Strategic Planning  
Program Director, Global  
Manufacturing, Medtronic



**Edel Browne**  
Senior Project Manager,  
Dexcom



**Kenny Deery**  
West Regional Enterprise  
Plan Programme Manager,  
Galway County Council



**Paul Sherlock**  
VP Q&R, ThermoFisher  
Scientific MBD



**Leo Ling**  
CEO, Board Director,  
Nikkiso Europe GmbH



**Sola Sonuga**  
UBS, Director – Group Finance  
Operations Governance



**Tom McDonagh**  
Managing Director at Thomas  
McDonagh and Sons Limited  
and Dockgate InglInvestment  
Company Ltd



**Kevin Lin**  
Director and President,  
Tuspark Holdings UK



**Pat Duane**  
SVP and GM Medical,  
TE Connectivity

## Academic Year 2024/25

Our School continues to grow in expertise and diversity with the addition of several outstanding new colleagues who joined us in the last academic year. Together, they bring a wealth of research, teaching, and industry experience that will enrich our learning environment and scholarly community.



**Prof Karyn Morrissey**  
Professor of Environmental Economics

We are pleased to welcome Professor Karyn Morrissey who joins us from the Technical University of Denmark. An expert in the marine economy and environmental economics, Prof Morrissey's work explores the interface between marine ecosystems, health, and economic policy.



**Dr Daniel Norton**  
Lecturer in Economics

Dr Daniel Norton joins the School as Lecturer in Economics. His research focuses on valuing marine and agricultural ecosystem services, particularly through his work with the Interreg-funded MOSES project at the Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMRU). Dr Norton's expertise will further strengthen our research capacity in environmental and natural resource economics.



**Dr Shekhar Misra**  
Lecturer in Marketing

We also welcome Dr Shekhar Misra as Lecturer in Marketing. His multidisciplinary research examines upper echelons in marketing and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), with work published in top marketing and management journals. Dr Misra's contributions align well with the School's emphasis on responsible business and leadership.



**Dr Zongyuan Li**  
Lecturer in Financial Economics  
and Technology

Dr Zongyuan Li joins as Lecturer in Financial Economics and Technology. His research investigates banking and real estate finance, particularly the effects of government regulation on these sectors. Dr Li's appointment enhances our strengths in financial economics and aligns with the School's research priorities in sustainable and digital finance.



**Dr Sharon Coyle**  
Assistant Professor in Business  
Information Systems

Joining us from the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Dr Sharon Coyle has been appointed Assistant Professor in Business Information Systems. She recently served as the academic lead for the design and delivery of a new Systems Innovation Course for the Royal Australian Navy. Dr Coyle brings a wealth of expertise in innovation, systems thinking, and digital transformation.



**Sophie Sweeney**  
Lecturer in Accountancy  
and Finance

Now a full-time Lecturer in Accountancy and Finance, Sophie Sweeney previously contributed to the success of the University of Galway Tax Clinic as a tax advisor. Her practical experience and teaching expertise will continue to benefit our students in the fields of taxation and finance.

# Professor Alma McCarthy Appointed Executive Dean at the College of Business, Public Policy and Law

We are proud to announce the appointment of Professor Alma McCarthy as the new Executive Dean of the College of Business, Public Policy and Law – the first female academic to hold this position. Professor McCarthy commenced the four-year term on March 1, 2025.

The first female academic to hold the role at the head of the faculty, Professor McCarthy commenced the post on March 1, 2025, for a four-year term.

Professor McCarthy previously served as Dean of J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics at University of Galway since 2021. She is Professor of Public Sector Management and her research interests include public sector leadership and human resource development, training, work-life balance, and remote working.

**I am honoured to be appointed to the Executive Dean role and look forward to building on the long established success of the three Schools in the College of Business, Public Policy and Law at University of Galway.**

Professor McCarthy said: "I am honoured to be appointed to the Executive Dean role and look forward to building on the long-established success of the three Schools in the College of Business, Public Policy and Law at University of Galway. Working with a strong team of colleagues in the College, we will continue to adapt to the changing needs of the economy and society to design and deliver excellent education in business, law, and hotel management and continue to engage in relevant and impactful research. External stakeholder engagement and impact on policy will also be a key priority for the College in its new strategic plan."

The College comprises the School of Law, J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics, and Shannon College of Hotel Management.

Professor McCarthy has extensive experience in designing, delivering, and evaluating leadership and management development training programmes aimed at improving managerial competence, with particular expertise in public and civil service management development.



Professor McCarthy spearheaded the remote working surveys during the pandemic, with the support of the Western Development Commission, generating the first and earliest insights into employee attitudes to the sudden and large-scale shift to working from home and out of the office. Her research has influenced national civil service talent development policy and the Government's national remote working strategy.



## Leading with Equality: Athena SWAN Silver Recognition for Gender Progress

University of Galway has achieved a significant accolade in the advancement of gender equality, with J. E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics securing an Athena SWAN Silver Award.

J. E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics is only the second School of Business in the Republic of Ireland to achieve such a standard.

The Athena SWAN Silver award recognises the commitment to advancing gender equality for both staff and students, and in creating evidenced cultural change within the University, and the internationally recognised accolade was awarded for the School's gender equality achievements, advancing from its Bronze Award in 2020.

This latest accreditation sees a total of ten Bronze Awards and two Silver Awards in the University, along with an Institutional Bronze Award which was renewed in 2021. Twelve out of the University's eighteen schools now hold Athena SWAN Awards.

University of Galway Vice-President for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Dr Helen Maher, said: "All of us at University of Galway are sharing in the congratulations for J.E. Cairnes School of Business and

Economics. We are greatly encouraged by the significant progress our university has made on gender equality, particularly in the College of Business, Public Policy and Law – where all three Schools have achieved Athena SWAN awards.

"Achieving a second Silver Award in our University demonstrates that we remain focused and committed to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in our culture, and our collective responsibilities."

Professor Alma McCarthy, Dean of J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics, said: "I am very pleased that our School has received this award as a testament to our commitment to gender equality. The Athena SWAN process is a rigorous external assessment process requiring evidence of action and progress. We worked on over 50 gender equality actions to achieve the Silver award. I commend all my colleagues for their commitment to equality and living our value of respect for all."

## Research that Shapes the Future of Work

Professor Alma McCarthy's expertise on remote and hybrid work recognised on The Explainer podcast

J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics is proud to highlight the achievements of Professor Alma McCarthy, Executive Dean of the College of Business, Public Policy and Law, Professor of Public Sector Management, and former Dean of the School. Alma's internationally recognised research into public sector leadership, human resource development, and the future of work continues to influence policy and practice in Ireland and beyond.

Her work has played a central role in shaping the Government's national remote working strategy and informing civil service talent development policy. With a research portfolio spanning topics such as leadership, work-life balance, training, and hybrid working, Alma's insights have appeared in leading

international journals including *Public Management Review*, *Public Administration Review*, *Human Resource Management Journal*, and the *Journal of Managerial Psychology*.

The relevance of this research to today's evolving workplace was recently recognised by

**The future of work is not about a single model, but about finding balance – meeting organisational needs while respecting the changing expectations of the workforce.**

**Prof Alma McCarthy**

**TheJournal.ie**, where Alma was invited to feature on their highly regarded podcast *The Explainer*. In an episode exploring why employers are shifting away from remote work, Alma drew on her extensive body of evidence to unpack the drivers behind return-to-office policies, the realities of hybrid work across Ireland, and the implications for both employers and employees.

Alma's work is an example of research that not only advances academic knowledge but also makes a tangible difference to policy and practice. Her insights continue to guide national debates, equipping leaders, organisations, and policymakers to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the modern workplace.



## Our Community Turns Red to Stand Against Racism

**Your voice matters, and when we come together, we make a real impact.**



Wear Red Day took place in March at J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics and was marked as a vibrant success.

The event brought students and staff together across campus to demonstrate solidarity, promote dialogue, and take a visible stand against racism. The energy across campus was remarkable, as so many of you joined together to show solidarity, spark conversations, and proudly stand against racism. From eye-catching red outfits to meaningful discussions, our community came together to affirm that diversity and inclusion are values we share and protect.

The impact extended beyond campus, with participants amplifying the message by sharing photos and reflections under the hashtag #WRD25. This important event was not just about a single day of awareness, it was a commitment to continuous action.

Wear Red Day was not only about one occasion but reflected an ongoing commitment to building a culture of respect, equality, and inclusion at the School.

**Chartered Star 2025: Dr Sophie Sweeney recognised for teaching and sustainability leadership**

The J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics is proud to celebrate Dr Sophie Sweeney, Lecturer in Accounting, who has been named Chartered Star 2025 by Chartered Accountants Ireland. This award highlights emerging leaders in the profession who are making a real impact through innovation, integrity, and a commitment to positive change.

Dr Sweeney's teaching focuses on sustainability in accountancy, finance, and tax – an area she is deeply passionate about. She brings sustainability frameworks and ESG principles (Environmental, Social, and Governance) into her lectures, challenging students to think critically about how business can drive meaningful change, even in difficult times.

As a Chartered Star, Dr Sweeney will represent Chartered Accountants Ireland at the One Young World Summit in Munich later this year. The Summit gathers young leaders from around the world to tackle pressing social and environmental issues, offering a platform to share ideas and inspire action.

Dr Sweeney credits her achievement to the supportive environment at University of Galway and thanks her colleagues, family, and especially her students, who she hopes will carry the lessons of sustainability far beyond the classroom.

Her work is a reminder of the vital role educators play in shaping not just future careers, but the values that will guide the business leaders of tomorrow.

**Teaching my students about sustainability in accountancy, finance, and tax is one of the things I'm most passionate about. I hope it sparks something in them that lasts far beyond the classroom.**

**Dr Sophie Sweeney**

# Bachelor of Commerce (Global Experience) Students Go Global With Deloitte

We are pleased to partner with Deloitte on the Bachelor of Commerce (Global Experience). This partnership recognises academic excellence across the Bachelor of Commerce programmes through support for Global Scholars undertaking study abroad as part of their degree, alongside the provision of tailored mentorship and travel bursaries. It also includes our dedicated collaboration hub within the BizHub at J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics, supporting closer engagement between students, industry and the School.



Daniel O Connor, (BComm Acc) MSU, Montana  
MSU Football Game



Cillian Warner, (BComm Global) UGA, Grenoble  
Snowboarding in Chamroussee



Hannah Whelan, (BComm Global), Augsburg University, Germany  
Mountain View



Eve Meehan, (BComm Global)  
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Triglav National Park



Cecilia Williams, (BComm Global)  
Aoyama Gakuin, Toyko  
Lake Kawaguchi near Mt Fuji



Patrick Goldrick, (BIS), ICN, Nancy  
Eiffel Tower, Paris



Ellie Hughes, (BIS), LUISS  
The Colosseum, Rome



Rachel Cotter, (BIS) EDHEC, Nice  
Day trip to Eze



Aaron Sweeney, (BComm Global), University of Groningen  
Reitdiephavn, The Netherlands



## International Recognition for Research Impact

We are proud to recognise Associate Professor Noel Carroll from the Business Information Systems discipline, who has been awarded the AIS Outreach Practice Publication Award at the 2024 International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) in Bangkok.

This prestigious award honours outstanding research that bridges academia and industry, and Professor Carroll's work exemplifies this connection. His award-winning article, published in *MIS Quarterly Executive* and co-authored with Mary Maher, explores the evolving role of low-code/no-code platforms in driving digital transformation. The research presents a detailed case study of Shell's digital transformation journey, led by Paul Kobylanski and his team, showcasing how organisations are leveraging these technologies to support citizen development, data-driven decision-making, and AI adoption.

This updated publication builds on prior research to demonstrate how emerging digital tools are being embedded in enterprise environments to drive strategic innovation. It contributes to growing discourse on how organisations can balance agility, governance, and innovation through accessible digital platforms.

The AIS Outreach Practice Publication Award is a significant recognition of research that delivers real-world impact and informs both industry practice and policy. While Professor Carroll was unable to attend the conference in person, the award was presented by Professor Andrew Burton-Jones, underscoring the global reach and relevance of research produced by our faculty.

We are proud of our colleagues who continue to contribute research that addresses current and future challenges in digital transformation and information systems practice.



This research demonstrates the value of collaboration between academia and industry to support digital innovation and transformation.

Noel Carroll  
Associate Professor

## Collaboration with Dublin City University on New Book Exploring Greener Uses of Digital Technologies

In October 2024, University of Galway J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics marked the launch of *Digital Sustainability: Leveraging Digital Technology to Combat Climate Change* (Springer Link). This open-access book explores the long-term sustainable use of digital technologies and their potential to address climate change.

Edited by Professor Theo Lynn (DCU), Dr Pierangelo Rosati, Dr David Kreps, and Professor Kieran Conboy (University of Galway), the book unites insights from international experts across fields such as smart cities, smart agriculture, energy management, and the circular economy. Contributions come from researchers representing institutions throughout Europe, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

The opening chapter, *Digital Sustainability: Key Definitions and Concepts*, provides a foundation for the volume by offering conceptual clarity in a rapidly evolving field. It introduces digital sustainability as a convergence of two complementary areas: Green IT, which focuses on minimising the environmental impact of technology, and Green IS, which examines how digital systems can enable broader sustainability goals. The chapter also introduces the concept of "twin transformation", arguing that digital and sustainability transformations must be approached as interconnected efforts. Through a synthesis of current literature and practical considerations, the chapter highlights the need for interdisciplinary collaboration to tackle sectoral challenges in areas



such as agriculture, energy, and urban infrastructure. By framing these discussions, the chapter establishes a shared language for researchers, practitioners, and policymakers working at the intersection of digital innovation and environmental responsibility.

This collaboration exemplifies the many benefits of co-creating knowledge across institutions. By combining diverse expertise and perspectives, university partnerships foster innovative solutions that might not emerge within a single institution. Staff involved gain invaluable opportunities for professional development, broadening their research networks and enhancing their capacity to influence policy and practice at national and

international levels. Furthermore, joint projects encourage resource sharing and the cross-pollination of ideas, driving research that is both rigorous and relevant.

**Collaborative research across universities accelerates innovation, enhances impact, and strengthens our ability to tackle complex global challenges such as climate change.**

## Dr Yixin Qiu Receives Best Reviewer Award from the Strategic Management Society

We are proud to share that Dr Yixin Qiu has been recognised with the Best Reviewer Award by the Global Strategy Interest Group at the Strategic Management Society's (SMS) 44th Annual Conference.

The SMS is a leading international organisation dedicated to the development and dissemination of insights in strategic management. This award recognises Dr Qiu's commitment to advancing research excellence within the field of global strategy, through her rigorous and constructive contributions to the peer review process.

Dr Qiu's achievement underscores the School's ongoing engagement with the global academic community and our dedication to shaping impactful research that informs strategy on an international scale.

**Dr Qiu's contribution to global strategy research reflects the calibre of scholarship fostered within the School.**



## Dr Anastasia Griva Receives AIS Women's Network Outstanding Educator Award

We are proud to recognise Dr Anastasia Griva, Assistant Professor in Business Information Systems and Programme Director of our MSc in Business Analytics, who has been awarded the prestigious AIS Women's Network Outstanding Educator Award.

This international accolade, presented by the Association for Information Systems (AIS) at the 2024 International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) in Bangkok, celebrates exceptional contributions to education in the field of Information Systems. As the leading global organisation for Information Systems professionals, AIS's recognition reflects Dr Griva's impactful teaching, mentorship, and leadership in advancing the discipline.

Dr Griva's commitment to educational excellence continues to enhance the learning experience for our students and reinforces the School's position at the forefront of Information Systems education.



**Anastasia's passion for education and dedication to her students is a testament to the high standards we uphold at J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics.**

## Interdisciplinary Research on Climate, Marine Sustainability, and Population Health

**Prof Karyn Morrissey,**  
Professor of Environmental and Marine Economics, University of Galway

**Can you give an overview of your research and how it relates to climate change?**  
For the first half of my research journey, I had two very separate fields of research: one in public health, particularly the determinants of health inequalities, and the other in marine economics. Two very different fields, with no apparent theoretical or policy overlap. However, if you read the papers, you can see that I used the same methodologies, primarily the simulation of large-scale population models (what are now called digital twins) to understand the continued drivers of health inequalities in Europe, and the welfare impact (employment, household income, etc.) of the marine sector at the national, regional and local level.

Another link was that all my papers were very data-driven, using different sorts of data with simulation techniques to understand population dynamics. And as crazy as this might seem in a university like Galway, it was only about 10 years ago that different scientific fields started to come together to do what we now take for granted – proper interdisciplinary research.

Indeed, as a young researcher I was constantly advised to pick a field and stop dabbling. One of the areas that was really starting to develop across disciplinary fields – the marine environment – was related to my own work. Scientists had, for 40 or 50 years, been highlighting the fundamental role that our oceans and seas play in climate regulation, food security, housing prices and even leisure choices. Advances in technology also meant that the ocean was increasingly seen as a new economic frontier, with untapped economic potential in almost every sector. And from a global policy perspective, something clicked; it became clear to society that our oceans were key to humanity's continued existence, and a place of great economic wealth.

Researchers from diverse backgrounds (oceanography, marine biology, agricultural science, health and medical sciences and social sciences) also realised that we were all set to make the same mistakes we had





made on land in this new drive for ocean exploitation.

Human health was one area of policy which everyone had a vested interest in. For example, many of our air pollution/quality laws evolved from research that documented the detrimental impact of pollution on human health. Knowing this, researchers started to look at the direct and indirect health impacts of our oceans. And it was from here that a new area of research developed – Oceans and Human Health.

Based on my research on health inequalities on one hand, and understanding the welfare impacts of the marine environment on the other, alongside a personal philosophy of 'always take the meeting,' I became part of this group. And it was then that I started to focus on climate change, the health impacts of climate change in the marine environment and the changes needed to make human-marine interactions more sustainable.

This has led me to research lived experiences of climate change in coastal communities in the Western Indian Ocean and ways of making marine practices more sustainable through Marine Spatial Planning in coastal communities in South-East Asia. In my work as part of the Lancet Commission's Countdown on Climate Change and Human Health, I also work to

understand the adaptation preparedness, needs and barriers of cities in regard to the health-related impacts of climate change. Cities are home to over half the world's population, a huge proportion of key infrastructure and they tend to be in coastal areas. So, they are important to my work in this respect.

**What are digital twins, and how do they help in understanding the impact of climate change on population health and natural resources?**

Digital twins are a fancy term for what are simply models of the real world. The game Sims City is an early and fun version of a digital twin. For researchers, these digital representations of cities, environments and people are powerful tools as they allow us to simulate the impact of different policies or decisions on 'real' situations. Scientists want to do good, but we can't always anticipate how our recommendations will work; digital twins allow us to road test the potential impacts of our proposed actions.

**Could you explain how digital twins are used in your research to model the impact of climate change adaptation policies on population health and natural resource management?**

So, one example of a project I am working on now is using an AI method – reinforcement learning – to recreate the transport system

and people's mobility patterns in Copenhagen. In this project, I am working with a group of computer scientists, transport modellers and climate modellers, to understand how the increase in precipitation that climate change will lead to in Northern Europe will impact people's daily commuting flows. Mobility, commuting and a person's ability to move across space is a key determinant of health and wellbeing. If anything, COVID taught us that the ability to move and interact with people across different environments is key to sustaining our health (access to food, medication, health services) and our feelings of wellbeing. As part of the project, my wonderful post-doc Dr Arthur Vandervoort and I are creating a digital representation of the mobility patterns and needs of the Copenhagen population, so that we can understand the health and wellbeing impacts of climate change on commuters in Copenhagen (CPH). We can then begin to examine different adaptation measures to both the physical infrastructure and our own commuting behaviours, to ensure sustainable commuting in the urban area.

**What kind of impact do you hope to achieve in your research over the coming years? Are there any particular areas that you're excited to explore further?**

I want to do everything, and all at the same time, and still have time for



friends, family and my dog, Alfie. But life has taught me that prioritisation is the key to getting things done, so I'm hoping to further my research on digital twins and Oceans and Human Health.

I would love to develop a digital twin for the whole of Ireland. My specific interest is coastal areas and communities but given that the definition of a person living in a coastal zone is someone living within 100km of the coast, that covers much of the Irish population. Besides the fun of building the model, I would hope to use the model as a means for understanding the adaptation needs of coastal communities and marine-based businesses to make sure that these communities and their environment can prosper into the future. So, colleagues should expect large-scale models of the Irish population, based not just on data but on actual on-going dialogues with the public, policymakers and lots of offers of collaboration.

**What motivates you the most in your work, and how do you overcome challenges in your research?**

Like most academics – a mix of fear of failure and curiosity about everything! But while fear of failure is a great short-term motivator, it is not conducive or helpful in the long term. So, what really motivates me is my colleagues, and working in particular with PhD students and

Early Career Researchers (ECRs). I'm really passionate about making academia more diverse and accessible for all the great minds that are out there. We need everybody on board, and all ideas on the table to overcome our current global challenges.

Regarding my curiosity, I find human behaviours and interactions endlessly fascinating. As an economist, the first thing we are taught is that humans are rational and make decisions based on rational behaviour. And frankly if that truly were the case, I wouldn't have wanted to become a researcher. Trying to understand human behaviours, and applying this understanding to improving our environment, is really interesting. Research is just a set of endless challenges, and I love it. I love problem solving, which is maybe why I am so drawn to data-based research and modelling as my tool kit for research. Having the privilege to work with super interesting people who also want to change the world is something very special. On a day-to-day basis, I also walk a lot – you'll see me and my dog Alfie regularly stomping around the campus looking dazed and confused, but I find being outside and moving really helps me to clarify my thoughts.

**You have previously worked in roles in Denmark and the UK. What brings you back to Galway?**

That's easy – the position. I had no plans to move back to Ireland in the short to medium term, but when I saw the position, I just had to apply. It seemed not just a perfect role for me from an academic perspective, but a role that could be truly impactful. I had kept up to date with what colleagues in the School and wider university were doing research-wise, particularly the Ryan Institute, and knew there was a lot of cutting-edge, interdisciplinary research being done in Galway. At the same time, living abroad and working across the globe has made me realise that Ireland is truly one of the most societally and environmentally progressive countries right now.

I have learned the hard way that good science can't just hide behind data, and that we as scientists need to interact with the public. Knowing this and recognising the open and progressive mindset in Ireland, and particularly Galway, I felt that University of Galway was a place where I could actually do some meaningful research. Research that would not just benefit but also showcase to the world what a small but progressive and open-minded society can achieve when we work together, rather than apart.

Prof Karyn Morrissey has contributed to new findings presented in the eighth global annual indicator report of the Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change – highlighting startling health threats from the changing climate, exacerbated by use of fossil fuels.

# A Career Shaped by Adaptability, People-Centred Leadership and a Passion for Coaching

**Orla Graham,**  
Chief People Officer at Davy and  
University of Galway alumna

**A** long-standing supporter of the University, Graham has shared her expertise through the University of Galway Business Summit and the School External Advisory Board – while helping to forge strategic partnerships with Deloitte and Davy. Now, as her daughter begins her own studies at University of Galway, she reflects on her career journey, the evolving world of work and the value of inclusive leadership. With experience across four industries, she has led major organisational change and growth, while championing inclusive workplace culture.

**I engaged with University of Galway to help provide students with opportunities to blend theory with the reality of the workplace. That experience is key in preparing graduates for a world of work shaped by digital transformation and AI.**

**Can you walk us through your journey from studying science to switching to business studies, and eventually rising to an executive role in HR?**

While I enjoyed my time studying science, I was delighted when University of Galway brought in the Postgraduate Diploma in Business Studies, which was like a year-long, mini-Bachelor of Commerce. I liked that business studies weren't black and white, and I really relished the breadth of perspective.

At that stage in Ireland, there were few career opportunities. So, I decided to do a year of travel before joining the Marks and Spencer graduate training programme in the UK. I worked in various locations across six years. It was tough but excellent training. I chose to work in HR and never looked back.

After 4 years in the UK, I moved to Dublin, initially with Marks and Spencer, before joining Coca-Cola as head of HR. The organisation had a lot of different nationalities, and they had recently made some substantial changes that were not panning out well. I was thrown in at the deep end, in truth, but I learned a lot. My number one focus was to develop a strong team because I knew my success was going to be the team's success. I achieved a lot in that time, all while having two of my three children.

My following role with Deloitte involved a lot of change and growth. When I started, there were 500 people; when I finished, there were 2,700. I started with a team of five that grew to 50. The professional services field is very much focused on recruiting talented people, many of whom are graduates. As part of my role, I engaged with University of Galway to help provide students with opportunities to blend theory with the reality of the workplace. That experience is key in preparing graduates for a world of work shaped by digital transformation and AI.

After 16 years with Deloitte, I was approached to join Davy. It was a big decision, but I decided it was a good time to change to an entrepreneurial Irish company. I qualified as a coach around 18 years ago. I'm a big believer in playing to people's strengths and helping them be their best selves. I have been

fortunate to work in four different industries, with smart, bright people. I'm a huge believer in continuous learning. To stay relevant, you've got to look outside, spot trends, anticipate change and stay focused and current.

**You have played an instrumental role in building University of Galway partnerships with Deloitte and now with Davy. You have also given your time to our Business Summit and School External Advisory Board. What inspired your decision to give back to the University?**

Galway is a special, cultural place. I spent four of the best years of my life there and made great friends. I felt like the world was my oyster. My youngest daughter is now going to University of Galway. Living away from home is such a pivotal experience. You learn a lot about yourself when you live independently. You develop that resilience that I think is an essential skill for graduates today.

It's been great to see the University go from strength to strength, building on 180 years of education. I was delighted to be able to give back, and to see how much is happening in the West of Ireland at the University Business Summit. I have fond memories of Galway, and seeing my daughter start there is extra special.

**HR has been in the spotlight recently, from concerns around burnout and presenteeism to the ongoing debate about remote work. What are some of the biggest changes you have seen in the world of work?**

COVID sparked some of the biggest changes we have seen in the past 25 years. The move to work from home showed us that work isn't a place – it's an output. Productivity went up in many organisations. That shift has

been positive in many ways, but it has also created challenges around culture and wellbeing.

We know that people thrive on in-person connection. While some roles can operate remotely, generally we all need human connection to allow for those moments that don't happen at home.

Hybrid models, if executed well, are a win-win. At Davy, we set up a clear model – two to three days in office, two at home. The office was redesigned for collaboration with a bigger collaborative hub, upgraded gym and more meeting rooms. With these changes in place and our central location, there is a palpable buzz in the office. People enjoy coming in, but they don't need to be in the office five days a week to be productive and achieve success at work.

AI is also changing work but I'm not fearful. We need to be curious about new technologies. It is a valuable resource that is here to stay. Approximately 20% of a typical role can be done by AI – that is significant. People are time-poor, and AI can take on time-intensive admin, reporting and analytic tasks. If managed well, AI can free us up to focus on meaningful work. Some roles may be eliminated, but new ones will be created.

**Since joining Davy as Chief People Officer in 2019, what are some of your greatest challenges and proudest moments?**

The only thing that is constant is change, even in a highly regulated industry like financial services. The move to Davy was a big learning curve. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there were leadership changes and an ownership change (Davy is now owned by Bank of Ireland). There was a push to reinvigorate the business through sustainability and diversity initiatives, while focusing on the client-first values that make up Davy's DNA.

We were also developing leadership and simplifying processes to ensure that people could do meaningful work. SEAR [Senior Executive Accountability Regime] has had a big impact on material risktakers [professionals occupying positions of high responsibility within financial institutions]. There is a lot more responsibility and processes to move through. So, it was important to equip managers with the necessary skills to lead in a purposeful way.

**Davy has placed increasing emphasis on gender equality and inclusivity. In your view, where do the biggest EDI challenges lie, and which strategies prove most effective in driving change?**

When I joined in 2019, 90% of the leadership were male, 10% were female. That spoke volumes. Now, 60% are male, and 40% are female. Different genders bring different skills to the table, skills that complement one another. Diversity of thinking matters and role models are important – if you can't see it, you can't be it. Regardless of the societal changes we have seen, women will hold themselves back if they feel they don't tick all the boxes. So, we have built programmes for women like EmpowHer and ElevateHer, to bring more balance, and we are providing more education around diversity, be that in ethnicity or gender. We recently received silver accreditation from Irish Centre for Diversity.

We also have programmes for men and women returning from parental leave.

**Many business school graduates will go on to lead teams early in their careers. What advice would you give them about building inclusive and productive teams from the outset?**

My advice would be to look beyond the textbook and get involved. Get experience early. While some people are intuitive leaders, most learn how to be good leaders through experience, working with mentors, observing what works and what doesn't, and learning to give constructive feedback.

Put yourself in your colleagues' shoes; ask questions, don't make assumptions. Leadership is about trust. If somebody sees that you have their back, they will work hard. Trust is gained – get to know people and take an interest in what drives and motivates them. AI may take on our administrative tasks, but emotional intelligence is an innately human, and irreplaceable, trait.



# Professor Tippmann's Research Among Most Cited in Leading Strategy Journal and Featured in New Global Teaching Case

Professor Esther Tippmann of the Centre for Entrepreneurial Growth and Scaling (CEGS) at the University of Galway's J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics has achieved a significant international accolade. Her 2023 paper has been ranked among the top 10 most cited articles in the *Strategic Management Journal*, widely recognised as the world's leading journal in strategy and an ABS 4\* "world elite" publication.

Co-authored with Dr Benoit Decreton (Nova School of Business and Economics), Professor Phillip C. Nell (Vienna University of Economics and Business) and Professor Andrew Parker (Durham University Business School), the research examines how senior managers

can improve decision-making in complex organisational settings. The study finds that while senior headquarters managers' involvement alone may reduce solution effectiveness, this can be overcome when senior subsidiary managers are also actively engaged – particularly for challenges originating outside the organisation.

Professor Tippmann explains: "Our results show that senior managers' collaborative involvement across organisational levels is key to effective problem-solving, especially in today's rapidly changing business environment."

This recognition highlights the global impact of Professor Tippmann's work and its relevance for both scholars and senior business leaders.



## Teaching Management and Business Scaling from Galway: New Aerogen Case Published

Professor Breda Sweeney, Professor of Accounting, in collaboration with Professors Jonathan Levie and Esther Tippmann from the Centre for Entrepreneurial Growth and Scaling (CEGS), published a new teaching case titled *John Power and Aerogen: Leading a Scaling Business*. The case exemplifies the School's strategic focus on local engagement with global reach.

Created in close collaboration with John Power, Founder and CEO of Aerogen – a pioneering MedTech company based in Galway – the case explores the practical challenges of scaling an innovation-driven business. Set in late 2019, the narrative focuses on leadership decision-making during a period of global expansion and organisational transformation.

Published in 2025 by The Case Centre, the case covers themes of entrepreneurship, innovation, strategic management, and management control systems. It is supported by a comprehensive teaching note and is now accessible to instructors and students worldwide.

This development reflects the School's mission to deliver globally impactful, locally grounded educational resources. It also highlights the role of CEGS in generating high-quality teaching materials that support executive and graduate learning, with a strong emphasis on scaling, innovation, and sustainable growth.



## PwC Honours Top-Performing Accounting Students

The J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics was proud to celebrate the achievements of five outstanding students awarded the prestigious PwC Medal and Prize for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Anna Kerdzaia, Alison O'Reilly, Gráinne O'Malley, Connor Sweeney, and Mark Dempsey were each recognised as the top-performing students in their respective accounting courses. This award reflects their dedication, academic excellence, and passion for the discipline of accounting.

The School is deeply grateful to PwC Ireland for their continued partnership and commitment to nurturing talent. PwC is a valued strategic partner of the School, supporting the development of future business leaders through initiatives such as the University's

Bachelor of Commerce Skills Pathway. This programme is designed to foster students' innovation and entrepreneurial skills, ensuring they are well-equipped to meet the evolving demands of the business world.

We warmly congratulate our prize-winning students on their well-deserved success and look forward to seeing their future contributions to the field.

**This programme is designed to foster students' innovation and entrepreneurial skills, ensuring they are well-equipped to meet the evolving demands of the business world.**



# Professor Kieran Conboy Leads Groundbreaking Review on Governance of Responsible Artificial Intelligence

**Professor Kieran Conboy,**  
J.E. Cairnes School of Business and  
Economics, University of Galway

Professor Kieran Conboy from J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics, University of Galway, in collaboration with colleagues from Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) Emmanouil Papagiannidis and Patrick Mikalef, has published a review on governance of responsible artificial intelligence (AI). This work appears in the Journal of Strategic Information Systems, a publication at the intersection of technology and organisational strategy.

The study provides a comprehensive examination of AI governance. It evaluates national and international regulatory bodies' policies, regulations, and guidelines designed to guide ethical deployment of AI technologies. It also considers efforts from organisations and industry groups establishing best practices in this area.

Key findings indicate current governance frameworks are often inconsistent and at times contradictory. Guidelines frequently remain abstract, lacking clarity and granularity. This presents challenges for AI designers, implementers, and users seeking to develop and manage AI systems responsibly. As AI expands across sectors, effective governance is necessary to ensure responsible development and deployment.

**As AI continues to permeate all sectors, effective governance is essential to ensure AI technologies are developed and deployed responsibly.**

The authors critically evaluate current responsible AI governance and identify gaps in practical application. To address these challenges, the study develops a synthesised framework for responsible AI governance. This framework articulates governance through three core dimensions:

- **Structural practices** – organisational and institutional arrangements supporting responsible AI;
- **Relational practices** – interactions and collaborations among stakeholders in AI development and deployment;
- **Procedural practices** – processes and methods used to design, implement, and assess AI systems responsibly.



The integrative framework provides a practical guide for organisations and policymakers, offering actionable insights to improve responsible AI governance in complex environments.

Professor Conboy emphasises the importance of clear and consistent governance mechanisms, stating: *"As AI continues to permeate all sectors, effective governance is essential to ensure AI technologies are developed and deployed responsibly. Our framework aims to offer clarity and direction in an otherwise fragmented landscape, helping practitioners navigate the complexities of responsible AI."*

This publication contributes to academic discourse on AI governance and supports practitioners and regulators shaping AI policy worldwide. Collaboration with NTNU colleagues Dr Emmanouil Papagiannidis and Dr Patrick Mikalef adds international perspectives, enhancing its global relevance.

## Broader Impact and Institutional Recognition

Professor Conboy's leadership in this review reflects J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics' focus on emerging challenges at the intersection of technology, governance, and strategy. It further reinforces the School's position as a centre for research with practical impact in technology management.



# Finding Belonging and a Family Away from Home in Galway

For many students arriving in Galway, the move is more than just a change of address; it's a leap into the unknown. But for one MSc in Business Analytics student, connection, belonging and a sense of home quickly came through the Bharat India Society

When I left India to pursue an MSc in Business Analytics at University of Galway, I wasn't just leaving a country, I was leaving behind my family, my friends, and the warmth of home. Little did I know, I'd find all of that and more in Galway, thanks to the Bharat India Society.

**Family isn't just about where you're from, it's about who you connect with. And here in Galway, I've found my family in the most unexpected moments.**

## A Society That's More Than Just a Society

The Bharat India Society isn't just a group; it's a family. From the moment I joined, I felt an instant connection with people who, like me, had left home to chase their dreams. But what makes this society truly special is that it doesn't stop at celebrating Indian culture – it's about creating a space where everyone feels included, no matter where they're from.

We don't just throw events; we weave memories. Whether it's organising Garba Nights where everyone's twirling in sync (and occasionally tripping over their own feet) or planning an all-day Aran Islands trip with over 200 students, we ensure no one feels like they're missing out. The laughter, the chaos, and the sheer joy of being together makes every event worth the effort.

## Galway, the Melting Pot of Cultures

One of my favourite moments was during the Navratri celebration. A group of Irish and international students showed up to try their hand at Garba and Dandiya. Watching them awkwardly but enthusiastically learn the steps reminded me why I love being part of this society. It's not just about bringing a piece of India to Galway – it's about inviting everyone to be part of it.

We make sure no one misses home. Be it the aroma of samosas at one of our events or the heartwarming feeling of singing Bollywood classics together, the Bharat India Society creates moments that make Galway feel like home, not just for Indians but for everyone who joins us.

## My Motivation: Creating a Home for All

What keeps me going is the thought that every person walking through our doors feels like they belong. Moving to a new country is overwhelming – new faces, new routines, and sometimes a longing for familiarity. Through the Bharat India Society, I've found a way to bridge that gap.

It's not just about big events. Sometimes, it's the little things – checking in on someone who seems quiet, organising a chai meet-up when exams are stressing everyone out, or simply sharing stories about life back home. These moments build connections that go far beyond cultural boundaries.

## From a Family Here to a Family Forever

As I reflect on my journey with the Bharat India Society, I realise how much I've grown – not just as a student but as a person. I've learned to lead, collaborate, and, most importantly, make people feel valued.

Looking ahead, my goal is simple: to continue creating a community where no one feels out of place. I want to see more cultural exchanges, more laughter, and more friendships that last a lifetime. Whether it's hosting bigger and better events, planning more trips, or just being there for someone when they need it, I'm committed to ensuring the Bharat India Society remains a home away from home for all.

## Why It Matters

Being part of this society has taught me that family isn't just about where you're from; it's about whom you connect with. And here in Galway, I've found my family in the most unexpected moments.

To anyone feeling lost or homesick, my message is simple: join us. Be part of the laughter, the chaos, the chai breaks, and the endless memories. Because in the end, it's not just about surviving in a new place – it's about thriving and living together.



# Empowered to Belong: Nargis Dewji's Journey from Galway to Global Banking

Hailing from Tanzania, University of Galway alumnus Nargis Dewji graduated from the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics with a Bachelor of Commerce, specialising in Economics.

We were delighted that Nargis, now pursuing a career in banking and financial services in Germany, could make time to chat with us about her time at the University.

**As an international student, securing a job that was the right fit was both important to me and a key goal. Knowing that the Career Development Centre offered robust support, I felt reassured that I would have access to the resources needed to guide me during my time at university.**

## What motivated you to pursue study at University of Galway?

While living in London, I discovered the University of Galway through friends I had studied with in Malaysia, who had moved to Galway to pursue their medical degrees. Their stories piqued my curiosity, so I started researching the university and the city itself.

What captivated me was Galway's reputation as one of the friendliest cities, its vibrant cultural scene, and its cosy, student-friendly atmosphere full of energy and charm. As I explored the university's website, I realised there were numerous untapped opportunities waiting for me – both academically and personally – and I knew it was the perfect place to continue my journey.

## Describe your overall experience as a student at University of Galway.

My time at the University of Galway shaped me into the person I am today. The university provided engaging curricula and was home to supportive, experienced lecturers who went beyond delivering exceptional lessons – they actively prepared us for the world outside the classroom. Their guidance was invaluable as they encouraged my career aspirations and showed me the pathways to achieve them.

Outside academics, University of Galway offered countless opportunities to explore interests beyond my course. Whether it was pursuing hobbies or participating in extracurricular activities, there was truly something for everyone. These

experiences allowed me to build my CV right on campus, a testament to the unique and enriching environment the university fosters. What stands out most to me is the collective support and dedication from everyone at University of Galway – they genuinely want you to succeed.

I'm grateful to still be in touch with many of the lecturers, mentors, and peers who supported me during my time at Galway – they continue to inspire and encourage me even today.

## What experience did you have with the Career Development Centre at University of Galway?

The Career Development Centre was an incredible resource during my time at Galway. They actively organised CV clinics, offering practical advice on how to make your CV stand out. The personalised feedback I received was invaluable – they carefully reviewed my CV and suggested opportunities tailored to my strengths and existing skills. This not only felt fulfilling but also boosted my confidence.

I was especially grateful for the Job Fair and Graduate and Internship Fair that they organised. These events were excellent opportunities to connect with potential employers and explore career paths, making a significant impact on my professional development.

## In what way, if any, do you feel the career supports available at University of Galway contributed to you getting the position you currently hold?

The Employability Award, which launched during my course, was

instrumental in preparing me for job interviews. The training involved attending skills-based workshops, gaining work experience, and completing self-assessments. These activities not only enhanced my confidence but also culminated in my earning the employability certificate, which played a key role in shaping my readiness for the professional world.

## Were there any other student support services or resources that you found especially helpful and why?

The Students' Union was invaluable in helping me navigate the university and connect with other students through the fantastic events they organised. I also participated in the Seas Suas Programme, which raised awareness about personal and community well-being, earning me a certificate that I'm proud of.

The Blackstone Launchpad was a game-changer for me as an aspiring entrepreneur. Their team guided my group on shaping our project idea and preparing for pitching. This experience inspired me to become actively involved with the Launchpad, where I had the chance to organise events promoting entrepreneurship and networking opportunities for students.

Additionally, volunteering through the ALIVE Programme was deeply fulfilling. It gave me the chance to pursue meaningful projects, like helping children with their homework after school – an experience I cherished. The wide range of resources and opportunities at the University of Galway truly enriched my journey.

## What advice do you wish you had received/listened to as a student?

I take a lot of advice and actively seek it out – I've always believed there's so much to learn from the experiences of others, but I do wish someone had told me earlier that personal growth and career growth go hand in hand. How you shape yourself – your mindset, habits, and values – is what ultimately sets you up for success in your career. For a long time, I viewed them as separate, but I've come to realise they're deeply connected. When you focus on growing as a person, you naturally build the foundation for a fulfilling and successful career.

## How did your course prepare you for your current career?

My course was incredibly versatile, offering a wide range of subjects such as economics, management, marketing, law, data analytics, and media, to name a few. This breadth allowed me to explore diverse disciplines, discover what truly interested me, and then focus on a major that aligned with my passions and career goals.

The lecturers were exceptional, each bringing something unique to the classroom through their teaching methods and course delivery.

Their approach made learning both engaging and practical. The inclusion of

individual and group projects further enriched my experience – they were not only fascinating to work on but also invaluable in helping me develop critical thinking, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, all of which have been instrumental in my career.

**Describe your time at University of Galway in one word.**  
Empowering.



# Voices of Our Bachelor of Commerce Students: Stories of Growth, Opportunity, and Global Experience

The combination of specialised accounting modules, exemption opportunities, and global experience has set me up for success while offering personalised support and flexibility.

**Jennifer Quinn**  
BComm (Accounting, Global Experience)



Studying Global Commerce at University of Galway gave me the chance to work abroad, expand my communication skills, and grow both personally and professionally.

**Aisling McDonnell**  
BComm (Global Experience)



The opportunity to study and work abroad through Global Commerce helped me discover my career path while immersing myself in different cultures and strengthening my language skills.

**Brendan Gunning**  
BComm (Global with German)



Commerce at University of Galway helped me grow as a leader, build teamwork skills, and explore global business through unforgettable experiences like studying in Paris.

**Niall Awogboro**  
Bachelor of Commerce



# University of Galway Business Summit 2025

## Navigating Tomorrow: Leadership, Cybersecurity and AI in the Future of Work

The University of Galway's Business Summit 2025, held on 4 April 2025, marked the third successful iteration of this flagship event in the Thinking Beyond: Thought Leadership for the Public Good series. This year's Summit was distinguished by its scale, impact, and visionary focus, attracting over 400 delegates from across Ireland and internationally.

The event convened leaders from business, academia, and policy to explore the rapidly evolving landscape of work, driven by leadership innovation, cybersecurity imperatives, and the transformative power of artificial intelligence (AI).

Set within the impressive Bailey Allen Hall, the Summit offered a comprehensive programme that combined keynote addresses, expert presentations, and panel discussions designed to equip organisations with practical insights and strategies for navigating the complexities of the future workplace.

### A Flagship Gathering of Thought Leaders and Industry Pioneers

The Business Summit 2025 reaffirmed its position as a premier forum for thought leadership in Ireland, uniting a diverse group of voices on topics critical to economic and social resilience. At the heart of the day was the keynote speech by Harry Hughes, CEO of Portwest, whose journey from a local Westport drapery to a global PPE leader exemplifies the adaptability and vision needed to thrive in an uncertain world. Hughes reflected on Portwest's growth in over 130 countries and underscored the importance of innovation and leadership in driving sustained global success.

This personal narrative set an inspiring tone for the day's exploration of technological disruption and leadership transformation.

**The Business Summit 2025 reaffirmed its position as a premier forum for thought leadership in Ireland, uniting a diverse group of voices on topics critical to economic and social resilience.**

### Artificial Intelligence: Harnessing Potential, Managing Risk

One of the Summit's core themes was the impact of AI on business, explored through a presentation by Michael Madden, Established Professor of Computer Science at the University of Galway, alongside Mairead Dooley-ffrench, Ecosystem Leader for Ireland at IBM. They provided delegates with an in-depth understanding of generative AI tools, illustrating how organisations can integrate AI for co-creation, process optimisation, and competitive advantage.

This session addressed not only the opportunities but also the risks, fostering a balanced perspective essential for sustainable AI adoption.

### Cybersecurity in the AI Era: A Strategic Imperative

The ever-expanding role of AI in business heightens cybersecurity concerns. The panel, chaired by Prof. Tom Acton, brought together specialists from the law, compliance, and cybersecurity sectors, including Annick O'Brien (General Counsel, CybSafe), Rafah Knight (CEO & Founder, SecureAI), Vaibhav Malik (Partner, Cybersecurity, Deloitte), and Rebecca Lindley (Head of Compliance, Centripetal). Discussions centred on practical measures businesses can implement to safeguard their operations amid evolving cyber threats. Delegates left the session armed with actionable guidance on regulatory compliance, risk management, and building resilient cybersecurity infrastructures in the age of AI.



### Leadership for the Future of Work: Embracing Change with Vision

The final panel, moderated by Dr Majella Giblin, Associate Professor of Management, explored leadership challenges as workplaces transform. Panelists included Bernard Birkett (SVP & CFO, West Pharmaceutical Services), Orla Graham (Chief People Officer, Davy), Robert O'Brien (VP HR, Medtronic), and Margot Slattery (Global Group Head of Social Sustainability, ISS World Services).

They examined how leaders can build inclusive, diverse cultures and maintain engagement in increasingly digital, flexible work environments. The conversation emphasised leadership agility and a people-centred approach as foundational to future organisational success.

### A Hub for Networking, Reflection, and Forward-Thinking

Beyond formal sessions, the Summit facilitated valuable networking opportunities, allowing delegates to connect across sectors, exchange ideas, and forge new partnerships. A light breakfast and lunch provided relaxed environments for ongoing discussions.

The day concluded with reflection points that invited attendees to synthesise insights and consider their application within their own organisations, reinforcing the Summit's commitment to actionable knowledge and public good.

**Attending Business Summit 2025 was a refreshing and inspiring experience. The quality of the panels and speakers was truly impressive. Thank you for organising such an enjoyable learning experience.**

**Attendee,  
Business Summit 2025**

### Elevating Galway's Position on the Global Stage

Business Summit 2025 clearly demonstrated University of Galway's role as a catalyst for innovation and leadership within the region and beyond. By bridging academic research and industry practice, the event helped cultivate a community ready to address the challenges and opportunities shaping the future of work on a global scale.

Supported by key partners and sponsors from across the public and private sectors, the Summit set a high standard for impactful dialogue and collaboration, embodying the ethos of Thinking Beyond.

### Looking Ahead

As we reflect on the success of Business Summit 2025, attention now turns to future editions of this vital event series. The University of Galway remains committed to fostering conversations that drive positive societal and economic impact, ensuring the region continues to thrive in an ever-changing global landscape.





# Reflecting on Resilience: Harnessing Crisis Lessons to Shape the Future of Public Service

## Leading Change in the Public Sector 2024

University of Galway's J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics convened a landmark event – *Leading Change in the Public Sector: Using Crisis to Deliver Future Reform*.

This flagship seminar, part of the acclaimed *Thinking Beyond: Thought Leadership for the Public Good* series, brought together senior leaders and expert panelists from across Ireland's public sector to reflect on the profound lessons learned from two defining crises of the 21st century: the 2008 financial crash and the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic – and explore how these lessons can inform ongoing and future public sector reforms.

Held in the O'Donoghue Centre Theatre, the event welcomed over 400 attendees representing a broad cross-section of government departments, defence forces, healthcare, and policy experts. It was a powerful demonstration of the public sector's commitment to continuous learning and transformation amidst ever-evolving challenges.

### Keynote Insight: Navigating Crisis with Leadership and Vision

Dr Orlaigh Quinn, former Secretary General at the Department for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, opened the event with a keynote address that drew on her extensive frontline experience managing government operations through both the financial and health crises. Dr Quinn's reflections underscored the resilience and adaptability of Ireland's public services, while also spotlighting areas where structural reform remains essential.

She poignantly illustrated how crisis can serve as a catalyst for positive change, offering a rare opportunity to reassess traditional processes and embed innovation deeply into public governance. Her address set the tone for a rich and nuanced discussion on the urgent need to embed agility, transparency, and collaboration at all levels of public service.

### Panel Discussion: Deep-Dive into Public Sector Transformation

Following Dr Quinn's keynote, a distinguished panel comprising Dr Ronan Glynn (Partner & Health Sector Lead, EY Ireland and former Deputy Chief Medical Officer), Elizabeth Canavan (Assistant Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach), and Brian Molloy

(Defence Forces Head of Transformation and Camogie Association President) engaged in an insightful conversation moderated by Professor Alma McCarthy, Dean of J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics.

The panel reflected on Ireland's journey from the 2008 economic crisis – marked by the EU-ECB-IMF troika's unprecedented oversight – to the dynamic challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which imposed the strictest public health measures in recent history. Each speaker contributed unique perspectives on how these events precipitated essential shifts in public policy, resource allocation, and institutional culture.

Brian Molloy provided a compelling update on the Defence Forces' ongoing cultural and structural transformation, emphasising that such changes are critical to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving security environment. Dr Glynn offered reflections on public health responses and how crisis management expertise is shaping the healthcare sector's preparedness for future emergencies.

### Harnessing Crisis for Public Good

Professor Alma McCarthy articulated the broader significance of the event: "Ireland's public services employ more than 370,000 people with an annual budget exceeding €90 billion in 2024.



– Brian Molloy, Defence Forces Head of Transformation & Uachtaráin Camogie Association

The event underscored the importance of learning from crisis to drive meaningful reform and strengthen the Irish public sector for future generations. It marked a vital milestone in the School's *Thinking Beyond* series, reinforcing University of Galway's role as a hub for insightful leadership dialogue in Ireland's evolving public landscape.

Many expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to engage with peers and thought leaders. The J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics remains dedicated to fostering dialogue and thought leadership that not only addresses today's pressing challenges but also anticipates tomorrow's opportunities for public good.

### Event Details Recap

- Date: Wed 13 November 2024
- Time: 8.30am–11.00am (including tea/coffee and light breakfast)
- Location: O'Donoghue Centre Theatre, University of Galway

### Academic and Leadership Team

- Chair: Professor Alma McCarthy, Professor of Public Sector Management, Dean, J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics
- Keynote Speaker: Dr Orlaigh Quinn, Former Secretary General, Department for Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- Panelists:
  - Dr Ronan Glynn, Partner & Health Sector Lead, EY Ireland and former Deputy Chief Medical Officer
  - Elizabeth Canavan, Assistant Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach

# Exploring the Business of Games: Legal and Industry Perspectives

## Reflections on Game Changers: The Business of Games – A Thinking Beyond Event

As part of the *Thinking Beyond: For the Public Good* event series, the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics and the School of Law at the University of Galway jointly hosted *Game Changers: The Business of Games – A Legal Perspective*. Held on 14 October 2024 at the University's Bizhub, this vibrant, interdisciplinary event examined the rapidly evolving digital games industry through both legal and business lenses.

Attended by industry leaders, legal experts, academics, and creative practitioners, *Game Changers* was a full-day programme that blended expert panels, interactive roundtables, networking opportunities, and even a playable games exhibit. The day sparked critical conversations about the challenges and opportunities facing Ireland's growing games sector within the broader European and global contexts.

**Bringing together business, law, and creativity, this event showcased the potential of Galway and Ireland as a hub for the digital games industry.**

Dr Maria O'Brien

### A Unique Collaboration of Expertise

The event brought together a distinguished line-up of speakers, including:

- **Brenda Romero**, CEO and Game Director, Romero Games
- **Alan Duggan**, CEO, Ardán
- **Colm Larkin**, CEO, IMIRT

Academic contributions came from leading researchers such as:

- **Dr Hristina Georgieva**, European Law Institute
- **Dr Maria O'Brien**, J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics and School of Law
- **Dr Abby Rekas**, School of Law, University of Galway
- **Dr Sevra Güler Güzel**, Bath Spa University
- **Dr Ambre Nicolle**, University of Munich (LMU), among others

This combination of industry and academic perspectives created a dynamic forum where regulatory, commercial, and creative considerations could be explored in depth.

### Highlights from the Day

The morning opened with a roundtable focused on "Setting the Scene: A Galway Perspective on the Irish Games Industry", examining local strengths and global opportunities for development along the Western Corridor.

Subsequent panel discussions tackled:

- **Gaming the System:** How regulation and competition policy can enable innovation and business growth within the sector.
- **Saving the Game:** The philosophical, legal, and technical issues concerning game preservation, cultural significance, and intellectual property rights.
- **Playing the Game:** Featuring a hands-on games exhibit hosted at the Communications and Computer Museum within the Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics, allowing attendees to engage directly with playable content.

A standout networking lunch titled "Islands of Interest" enabled participants to connect around specialist themes, fostering conversations that extended well beyond the event itself.



### Advancing Galway's Position in the Games Industry

The event underlined Galway's potential to position itself as a significant player in the European digital games industry, leveraging strengths in creativity, research, and policy expertise.

**This event demonstrated the value of cross-sector collaboration – connecting policy, business strategy, and creative practice to strengthen the future of the games industry in Ireland.**

### A Platform for Future Collaboration

In partnership with Ardán, IMIRT, NEXUS by Gamerfest, and the WRAP Fund, *Game Changers* also helped build bridges between academia and industry. The diversity of perspectives ensured a well-rounded discussion on regulatory environments, competition law, and the preservation of digital heritage.

Funded in part by the College of Business, Public Policy, and Law Strategic Research Support Fund, the event was not only a showcase of expertise but also a call to continue the dialogue between disciplines that will shape the future of digital games both in Ireland and beyond.

For those with a stake in the digital games sector – whether as creators, policymakers, or academics – *Game Changers* provided an essential space to exchange ideas, form networks, and explore new possibilities.



# Shaping Boardroom Leadership for a Sustainable Future

## Insights from the *Getting on Board with Sustainability* Event

As part of the *Thinking Beyond: For the Public Good* event series, the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics hosted *Getting on Board with Sustainability – A Board Member Perspective*. This impactful event brought together industry leaders, governance experts, and aspiring board members for an engaging panel discussion focused on embedding sustainability at board level.

Held in November 2024, the event was a resounding success. Participants praised the session for its insightful perspectives, practical advice, and thought leadership on a topic that is increasingly shaping the future of governance.

**Sustainability isn't just a standalone agenda item, it must be embedded across decision-making, strategy, and culture.**

Dr Orla Lenihan

### Rethinking the Board's Role in a Changing Landscape

The discussion was driven by an urgent need: organisations face mounting pressures from investors, regulators, and society to adopt more sustainable practices. As sustainability disclosure requirements intensify, boards are expected to lead with vision and integrity – but many directors still feel underprepared to fulfil this role effectively.

The panel addressed these challenges head-on, offering guidance on how boards can enhance their capacity to oversee sustainability strategy and align long-term business goals with environmental and social priorities.

### Practical Takeaways for Board Members

Key recommendations that emerged from the event included:

- Integrating sustainability into core business strategy rather than treating it as a separate issue.
- Building board competence in ESG, ensuring directors stay current on emerging trends and regulatory requirements.
- Establishing clear sustainability metrics to monitor progress and ensure accountability.
- Fostering a board culture that encourages transparency, challenge, and diverse perspectives.
- Engaging meaningfully with stakeholders to understand evolving expectations around environmental and social responsibility.

**Boards have a critical role to play in how organisations navigate the risks and opportunities that sustainability presents.**

Dr Orla Lenihan

### Advancing the Public Good Through Thought Leadership

*Getting on Board with Sustainability* was part of the *Thinking Beyond: For the Public Good* series, reflecting the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics' dedication to driving societal impact through research, education, and dialogue. The event exemplified the school's commitment to equipping leaders with the insights needed to tackle complex global challenges.

For those who attended, the session provided invaluable guidance on rethinking governance for a sustainable future. For those who missed it, the message is clear: the time for boardrooms to lead on sustainability is now.

**An enlightening session that bridges the gap between governance theory and the practical realities of sustainability in the boardroom.**

Event Attendee



### Expert Voices Shaping the Conversation

Together, they delivered a compelling discussion on the board's evolving role in sustainability, the complexities of regulatory landscapes, and the skills and mindsets required to drive sustainable governance.

#### Chaired by



**Dr Orla Lenihan,**  
Assistant Professor in Governance,  
Sustainability and Finance, and  
Programme Director of the MSc  
Sustainability Leadership

#### The Panel



**Barry Gavin,**  
Experienced Sustainability  
Non-Executive Director



**Dr Margaret Cullen,**  
Governance Advisor  
and Independent  
Non-Executive Director



**Niall Fitzgerald,**  
Head of Ethics and  
Governance, Chartered  
Accountants Ireland



**Deirdre Ryan,** Director of  
Sustainability & Quality  
Assurance at Bord Bia and  
Board Member at Sport Ireland

# National Award Recognises University of Galway Tax Clinic's Public Good Impact

The University of Galway was delighted to win the Excellence in Education accolade at the Irish Accountancy Awards 2025 for the University of Galway Tax Clinic, directed by Professor Emer Mulligan. This award recognises the Clinic's significant contribution to education and its wider impact in advancing social inclusion and financial empowerment.

The University of Galway is pleased to announce that the University of Galway Tax Clinic, directed by Professor Emer Mulligan, has been awarded the Excellence in Education accolade at the Irish Accountancy Awards 2025. This award recognises the Clinic's significant contribution to education and its wider impact in advancing social inclusion and financial empowerment.

The Irish Accountancy Awards highlight the most innovative initiatives shaping the profession in Ireland. To receive this distinction is to be acknowledged not only for academic achievement but also for delivering meaningful benefits to society. The Tax Clinic exemplifies this by providing free, confidential tax guidance and education to individuals who are often unrepresented, including students and members of marginalised communities.

At its core, the Clinic is guided by a clear mission: to equip citizens with the knowledge and confidence to manage their tax affairs. In an environment characterised by increasing complexity, the Clinic addresses the risks of exclusion and misinformation by offering accessible, practical tax education. In doing so, it strengthens financial literacy, reduces vulnerability, and promotes fairness across the system.

Reflecting on the award, Professor Mulligan noted: *"Receiving the Excellence in Education award is a proud moment for the Tax Clinic and for the University of Galway. The Clinic reflects our commitment to the public good by equipping individuals with the skills and understanding needed to navigate the tax system effectively. We have seen first-hand the transformational impact that this knowledge can have, particularly for those most in need of support."*

The Tax Clinic also serves as a flagship initiative of the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics in embedding experiential, real-world learning into the student journey. Volunteer student advisors, working under the guidance of professional tax practitioners, provide tailored advice to clients. This approach not only bridges academic study with professional practice but also instils a strong sense of civic responsibility in future tax professionals.

The impact is both immediate and long-term. Clients leave consultations with answers to pressing tax queries, as well as the confidence to engage independently with Revenue in the future. For many, this marks an important step towards financial independence. Students, meanwhile, gain invaluable experience in client engagement,



professional ethics, and the complexities of tax practice. Equally important is the Clinic's role in supporting social inclusion. By working in partnership with community organisations, it ensures that groups most at risk of exclusion from financial systems can access the information and support they need.

The Excellence in Education award is a fitting recognition of a project that embodies the University's mission to serve the public good. It demonstrates the capacity of higher education to contribute to a fairer, more inclusive society.

Congratulations are extended to Professor Emer Mulligan, Dr Maggie O'Neill, the module team, our pro bono tax advisors, dedicated students, and community partners, whose expertise and commitment have been central to this achievement.

The University of Galway Tax Clinic will reopen in Spring 2026, continuing its work to advance tax literacy and promote social equity, one consultation at a time.

**This award is a testament to the public good impact that can be achieved when education, professional expertise, and community engagement come together.**

**Prof Emer Mulligan**



# Celebrating Alumni Excellence: Anne O'Riordan

## 2025 Alumni Award for Business and Commerce

Anne O'Riordan, recipient of the 2025 Alumni Award for Business and Commerce, has built an international career defined by strategic leadership, digital transformation, and a longstanding commitment to advancing women in business. A graduate of University of Galway, Anne's professional journey spans three decades, multiple continents, and several of the world's most influential corporate environments.

**Anne's influence extends well beyond corporate leadership. She is currently an independent non-executive director on the board of Jazz Pharmaceuticals.**

Anne is the former Group Director of Digital at Jardine Matheson Limited, a \$40 billion Asian conglomerate headquartered in Hong Kong. From 2019 to 2024, she oversaw the development and implementation of the Group's digital and innovation strategy, supporting transformation across a diverse portfolio of companies. During this period, she also served on the boards of Dairy Farm Management Services, Hongkong Land Limited, and the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, contributing strategic guidance across the retail, real estate, and hospitality sectors.

Before joining Jardine Matheson, Anne worked for 29 years with Accenture, progressing to the role of Senior Managing Director. Her work brought her to Dublin, Chicago, New York, London, and Hong Kong, where she partnered with global organisations undergoing significant operational change. She led Accenture's Life Sciences practice internationally, supporting companies in navigating shifts in healthcare markets, regulatory landscapes, and technological innovation.

Anne's influence extends well beyond corporate leadership. She is currently an independent non-executive director on the board of Jazz Pharmaceuticals, a global biopharmaceutical company founded in Palo Alto and headquartered in Dublin. She also plays a significant role in Hong Kong's business and professional community, serving on the board of the International Women's Forum of Hong Kong as treasurer, and contributing her expertise to both the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong and The Women's Foundation. In addition, she is an active member of the 30% Club, supporting efforts to drive gender balance at board and senior leadership levels.

Anne's academic achievements reflect her multidisciplinary expertise. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Biotechnology from Dublin City University and a Postgraduate Degree in Financial Accounting and Management Information Systems from University of Galway, and has completed the Women's Directorship Programme at the University of Hong Kong as well as the Stanford University Directorship Program.

## 2025 ALUMNI AWARD FOR BUSINESS AND COMMERCE



alongside her outstanding professional accomplishments, makes her an exemplary recipient of the 2025 Alumni Award for Business and Commerce.

**Anne O'Riordan joins a distinguished group of past recipients whose achievements reflect the values of responsible leadership and societal impact championed by the J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics.**

Anne remains an important part of the University of Galway community through her role on the J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics External Advisory Board. She has been a strong ambassador for the University in Hong Kong, actively supporting the institution's global engagement and contributing guidance on emerging industry trends, digital leadership, and responsible business practice.

The University of Galway Alumni Awards Programme, established in 2000, has honoured 141 graduates who have made significant contributions to society across business, public service, the arts, science, sport, and global leadership. Anne O'Riordan joins a distinguished group of past recipients whose achievements reflect the values of responsible leadership and societal impact championed by the J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics.

Anne O'Riordan's career demonstrates how innovation, global experience, and principled leadership can create meaningful outcomes for organisations and communities alike. Her enduring connection to the University,



## One of Ireland's Youngest Ever TDs is a J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics Graduate

Albert Dolan, a graduate of the J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics, has been elected as one of the youngest TDs ever to Dáil Éireann.

Dolan, from Monivea, Co. Galway, previously became the youngest serving councillor in Ireland and subsequently the youngest Cathaoirleach in County Galway. His election to national office represents a significant milestone, reflecting both his personal achievements and the broad range of career pathways pursued by graduates of University of Galway.

The trajectory from business studies at University of Galway to national political office demonstrates the applicability of a foundation in business and economics across public service and leadership roles. Dolan's progression provides a clear example of the diverse and meaningful career opportunities that University alumni can pursue.

University of Galway congratulates Albert Dolan on his election and anticipates the positive contributions he will make in his role as TD.

**Dolan's progression provides a clear example of the diverse and meaningful career opportunities that University alumni can pursue.**



## Graduate Success: James Fahy Leads Award-Winning Start-Up JustTip to €2.1 Million in Funding

James Fahy, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of JustTip, and a graduate of the J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics, has successfully led the company to significant growth and recognition. Alongside fellow co-founder Ciara Walsh, Fahy developed an innovative cashless tipping solution that streamlines gratuity management for businesses and employees.

JustTip recently raised €1.1 million in its latest funding round, bringing total investment to €2.1 million, supported by ComOp and Enterprise Ireland. The company now serves over 600 merchants and 13,000 employees, providing a fully compliant and efficient platform for managing tips and service charges, addressing the increasing demands of a cashless society.

Earlier in 2024, Fahy and Walsh were named Overall Winners of the Enterprise Ireland Student Entrepreneur Awards, a recognition of their innovation, leadership, and impact in the start-up ecosystem.

Fahy credits his education at University of Galway with fostering the confidence to pursue entrepreneurship: *"University of Galway helped foster the confidence to take the leap into entrepreneurship. The support and network I built there continue to be invaluable on this journey."*

JustTip's success demonstrates the combination of entrepreneurial skill and innovation nurtured at the J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics. The company's growth reflects the potential of graduates to create meaningful impact in business and society.

**University of Galway helped foster the confidence to take the leap into entrepreneurship. The support and network I built there continue to be invaluable on this journey.**

**James Fahy**

# University of Galway and PwC Renew Strategic Partnership to Develop Business Talent

University of Galway and PwC Ireland have renewed their long-standing strategic partnership, extending the collaboration to 2030. The agreement reflects a shared commitment to developing business talent and future leaders for Ireland and internationally. It also strengthens the alignment between education and industry, in line with the University's ethos of working for the public good.

**This collaboration enables our Bachelor of Commerce students to cultivate essential entrepreneurial and leadership skills through practical projects that are mentored by seasoned industry professionals.**

Prof Alma McCarthy

The renewed partnership will see J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics and PwC Ireland collaborate closely on the University's flagship Bachelor of Commerce Skills Pathway. This programme focuses on equipping students with the future-ready skills and competencies required in an increasingly dynamic business environment.

## Responding to a Changing Workplace

At the centre of the partnership is a recognition of the need to prepare graduates for a rapidly evolving workplace where technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI are reshaping industries. In this context, demand for digital fluency, entrepreneurial thinking, and collaborative expertise continues to grow.

"PwC's research shows that more still needs to be done to upskill today's workforce, especially as AI and Generative AI rapidly change the business landscape. Education plays a crucial role in ensuring our graduates are ready for this future," said Doone O'Doherty, People Partner at PwC Ireland. "As one of Ireland's largest graduate recruiters, we know

first-hand how important it is to develop talent with the digital, entrepreneurial, and collaborative skills needed for the modern workplace. We are delighted to continue our partnership with University of Galway to help prepare students for both the Irish and global business environments."

## The Bachelor of Commerce Skills Pathway

The Bachelor of Commerce Skills Pathway, a cornerstone of the partnership, provides students with opportunities to develop practical capabilities through three core modules:

- Skills for Success
- Skills for Business
- Skills for Innovation, Creativity and Enterprise

These modules are designed to enhance student confidence, strengthen innovation capacity, and build business acumen through hands-on, project-based learning. With mentorship and guidance from industry leaders, students are encouraged to develop entrepreneurial mindsets and collaborative skills that are directly applicable in professional settings.



From left, Evan Gillespie, Assurance Associate at PwC; Professor Emer Mulligan, Head of the Accountancy and Finance Discipline, J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics at University of Galway; Professor Peter McHugh, Interim President of University of Galway; John Daly, Partner, PwC Mid-West Region; Mairead Connolly, Tax Partner, PwC Mid-West Region; and Leanne Helebert, Assurance Associate at PwC. Credit – Mike Shaughnessy

## Enrichment Opportunities

In addition to these core modules, the programme offers a broad array of enrichment opportunities, including:

- **Peer-Assisted Learning:** Students support and learn from one another, fostering a collaborative and inclusive learning environment.
- **On-Site Shadowing:** Opportunities to shadow PwC graduates, providing insight into life within a professional services firm.
- **Guest Lectures:** PwC professionals deliver specialised sessions offering real-world perspectives on current business challenges.
- **Employability Skills Training:** Targeted workshops designed to enhance career readiness, covering communication, problem-solving, and leadership.
- **Professional Mentoring:** Access to PwC mentors who provide personalised guidance on career pathways and industry expectations.

Professor Alma McCarthy, Dean of J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics, emphasised the importance of the partnership: "We are delighted to renew our successful partnership with PwC. This collaboration enables our Bachelor of Commerce students to cultivate essential entrepreneurial and leadership skills through practical projects that are mentored by seasoned industry professionals. Our relationship with PwC has flourished over the past decade, and we are excited to build on this foundation to deliver even greater value to our students and wider society."

## Building Future Talent for Society

The renewal of this partnership exemplifies University of Galway's commitment to the public good. It ensures that students not only acquire academic knowledge but also develop the competencies required to contribute meaningfully to the economy and society. By linking education with enterprise, the University continues to shape graduates who will become the leaders, innovators, and problem-solvers of tomorrow.

At a time of profound change in business and society, the collaboration between University of Galway and PwC demonstrates a forward-looking approach to education – one that prioritises real-world impact, social responsibility, and sustainable success for future generations.

# Jarrad Butler: From Rugby Captain to Business Leader — Pursuing Purpose through the University of Galway Executive MBA

From captaining Connacht Rugby to founding his own skincare brand, Jarrad Butler has always stood at the intersection of performance, leadership, and purpose. Now, as a member of University of Galway's Executive MBA Class of 2024/2025, Jarrad is applying the same commitment and strategic focus that defined his sporting career to his next chapter as a business leader.

**This MBA opens the door to knowledge that will help me be a better business owner and leader – and surrounds me with a network of like-minded people with a shared business mindset.**

## A Life in High-Performance Environments

Having competed at the highest level in rugby for over a decade, Jarrad brings a wealth of lived experience in teamwork, discipline, and high-pressure decision-making. Leadership was never theoretical for him – it was a necessity on and off the pitch. "A professional rugby team is made up of 40 to 50 highly skilled, competitive individuals.

Communication, shared purpose, and the ability to stay calm under pressure – these aren't abstract skills, they're how we survive and succeed."

These leadership instincts now inform his role as founder and CEO of Sportskn, a skincare company designed for people who exercise. His post-rugby transition was a conscious choice: "When I retired from professional sport, I gave myself 12 months to focus on growing my business. The Executive MBA at University of Galway came up in a conversation with my mentor, Aisling Burke, and we both saw the potential in aligning business development with formal leadership training."

## Learning that Reflects Real-World Business

Jarrad was drawn to the Executive MBA's breadth and rigour. With its emphasis on Transformational Leadership and a strong foundation across core business disciplines – spanning finance, governance, and digital enterprise – the programme

aligned with his aspirations for Sportskn and beyond. "Every lecture presents something I can directly relate to my business. Whether it's strategy, marketing, or operations, I'm constantly reflecting on what I could be doing differently – or better. Even the casual conversations with classmates from diverse sectors spark insights I hadn't considered before."

The programme equips him not only with theoretical knowledge but also with the capacity to scale a business and lead with impact.

## Entrepreneurial Drive, Future Vision

With ambitions to expand Sportskn into the UK and EU markets, Jarrad's entrepreneurial energy is unmistakable. Whether with this venture or another, his commitment to the founder's seat remains clear.

"I've always been passionate about entrepreneurship. If not Sportskn, it'll be another business. The Executive MBA gives me the confidence and capability to keep moving forward, to grow as the business grows. This MBA opens the door to knowledge that will help me be a better business owner and leader – and surrounds me with a network of like-minded people with a shared business mindset."



## Purpose-Led Impact: Skincare for Wellness, Rugby for Community

For Jarrad, business is about more than commercial success. His vision for Sportskn is rooted in public value – promoting health and wellness, and using skincare as a gateway to community engagement. He sees the brand as a tool to inspire young people to embrace sport, self-care, and active living.

"The idea of using my business to promote health and connect with communities is something I find really exciting. I want to build a brand – and around it, a community – that believes in the same values."

Jarrad also continues to coach with Galwegians RFC, mentoring the next generation of players and sharing the mindset that carried him through a distinguished rugby career.

## A Legacy of Leadership, On and Off the Pitch

Jarrad's legacy, like his approach to business, is deeply intentional. He is proud of his achievements on the field but equally motivated by the opportunity to build something

lasting off it – anchored in value, vision, and community. "I'm proud of my rugby journey – the places it brought me and the people it introduced me to. Now, I'm focused on developing others, growing a business, and shaping a legacy based on wellness, leadership, and shared purpose."

## Why Jarrad Butler Embodies the University of Galway Executive MBA

At J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics, we aim to support leaders who bring passion, integrity, and ambition into everything they do. Jarrad Butler exemplifies this mission. His journey from elite athlete to purpose-led entrepreneur reflects the ethos of the Executive MBA: leadership that transforms, business that matters.

We are proud to welcome Jarrad to our Executive MBA community and look forward to the impact he will continue to make – in sport, in business, and in society.

## About the Executive MBA

University of Galway Executive MBA is designed for professionals with leadership potential seeking to accelerate their impact across business, entrepreneurship, and the public good. Rooted in real-world relevance, the programme combines academic excellence with global perspectives and peer-driven learning.



# Charting Her Own Course: From Olympic Podiums to Executive MBA Excellence

## A Champion in Every Arena

BA alumna and World Champion Rower Fiona Murtagh has carved a path defined by discipline and drive, both on the water and in the boardroom. One of Ireland's leading rowers, she won an Olympic bronze medal at Tokyo 2020. In 2025 she added silver at the European Rowing Championships in Plovdiv and the World Rowing Cup in Lucerne to her list of achievements, all while completing her postgraduate studies. She most recently claimed gold in the women's single sculls at the 2025 World Rowing Championships in Shanghai.

In June she was named *Irish Times* Sport Ireland Sportswoman of the Month, in recognition of her resilience in stepping from team boats into the single sculls at international level.

**Can you take us through a typical day in the life of Fiona Murtagh?**

It's been a busy year; the schedule fills up quickly. I've been a full-time athlete for five years, but I've always done something else alongside my career in sport. I did my MBA at University of Galway. Then, in the year following the Olympics, Rowing Ireland encouraged me to shift my focus and progress my career outside of rowing. That dualism is important for athletes.

So, I started working with J.P. Morgan this year as part of their athlete programme. I hadn't worked in that kind of environment since 2020. It's been great to step back in, but it does create a very busy schedule.

I train before work, early in the morning. Sometimes I will do a lunchtime run or weights session, depending on the day. Then, it's back to work, with more training again in the evenings. There is more downtime during the weekends to make up for the busy week. My coaches and work colleagues have been really encouraging during this transition. I wouldn't be able to do this without them.

**The experience opened up a whole new side of the sport that I had closed myself off from...**

**You were named the *Irish Times* Sport Ireland Sportswoman of the Month in June of this year, following your outstanding performances at the 2025 European Rowing Championships. How has this recent wave of success felt for you?**

It's been a crazy year. For those who don't know, there is sweep rowing, where a rower holds one blade, and sculling, where they hold two. All my life, I had been a one-blade girl. It was my identity, my home – in eights, fours and pairs. I did the fours in Tokyo and the pairs in Paris.

After the Paris Olympics, there was a management turnover, coaches left, and some athletes retired. That left us with mostly scullers at the rowing centre. It was daunting because I didn't see sculling as my strength. I would have actively avoided it in the past, but I thought, "It's sink or swim time. I'll have to adapt."

My coach was so supportive and put no pressure on me. After a couple of months of adapting, I started to build up my speed. By March, I was selected in the single. I still had no idea how I would fare internationally. At the Europeans in May, I won my heat and semi race. I grew massively in confidence throughout that regatta. The silver medal was a shock. Six months earlier, I would not have believed that was possible.

Being alone in the boat for the first time was daunting, but the support from the brilliant group of athletes and coaches here have made that transition easier. Paris was a disappointing result, so to bounce back and enter a new field felt huge. The experience opened up a whole new side of the sport that I had closed myself off from. There was no reason to believe that I couldn't do it; I had just been telling myself that I couldn't. So, the last year has brought about a huge shift in mindset.

**You took a leap when you decided to row solo, supported by your coach Dominic Casey – a move that has clearly paid off. What have you learnt from this shift in your career?**

As a competitive, high-performance athlete, I have an innate drive to seek out medals. But in the last year, I have started to appreciate everything that surrounds the wins. There are only four days in a 365-day year where you might have the chance to stand on a podium. The vast majority is taken up by the days in between, and you have to enjoy those too.



This change has also made me realise that nothing is guaranteed in sport. I went into the Olympic Games thinking I was going to come home with a medal, then I didn't make the final.

**And then you surprised yourself as a sculler...**

That's the thing. It's changed how I feel about training over time. I am enjoying it so much more now. Even though I can put immense pressure on myself, I have to enjoy what I'm doing first. That enjoyment makes the difference, as well as the support that I get from the University, from my colleagues, my coaches, my teammates. Not to mention my family and friends – they have always been so understanding of the sacrifices I've had to make.

I'm enjoying training now more than ever, which has taken me by surprise – especially now that I'm training on my own in the boat. I know that I thrive most in teams, but my team is now a wider support team. And the culture we have here makes it easier – we train hard but also relax together, which keeps balance.

Rowing is an iconic part of Galway's cultural landscape, and we're so lucky here in the University to be looking out onto the river.

It is a very accessible location right in the city and the University Boat Club has seen so much success. Donnacha Keeley and Martin O'Grady won bronze this year at the U23 Worlds, and we had a highly successful season at the National Championships.

**Looking back, what part of your MBA experience do you think had the biggest impact on your mindset or decision-making, particularly during key moments in your sporting career?**

I remember the morning of my Tokyo Olympic final – I got an email from the University telling me that I had been accepted into the programme. Then later that morning, we won our Olympic medal. What a great day! I loved my time on the MBA.

The flexible structure of the programme really suited me at that time. It was quite different to what I expected, especially the personal development side. I learned so much about myself through that exchange of knowledge across different fields.

I have worked in teams all my life but understanding team dynamics and having the words to describe those dynamics, in sport or business environments, was very

interesting. Being in a room with intelligent, experienced people was invaluable. I always left feeling motivated and inspired. We still have a lovely MBA group chat, and there is such a sense of community. Everyone watches my races!

**As a former MBA student, do you still feel a sense of belonging to the School and the MBA community?**

Yes, it's such a lovely campus to return to. There is a strong MBA community, and they organise a lot of events. With my training schedule, I can't often attend, but the invite is always there. Often, when you finish a programme, that's the end of it, but there is always an open door at University of Galway. The University community is so supportive of my rowing career, and that sense of belonging never leaves you.

# High-Performing Leader and GPA Scholar Stephen Coen Joins University of Galway Executive MBA Class

Stephen Coen, General Manager of the software company Senus and captain of the Mayo Gaelic football team, has commenced the Class of 2024/2025 Executive MBA at J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics, University of Galway. The cohort comprises high-achieving professionals, reflecting the School's focus on leadership, strategic vision, and public good impact.

Stephen was awarded a GPA Scholarship, which recognises elite Gaelic games athletes who combine sporting excellence with academic ambition.

**As a GPA Scholar, this MBA is a timely opportunity to hone my strategic management skills and further my leadership. The scholarship's support and network resonated deeply with my dual sporting and corporate background.**

## From Elite Sport to Corporate Leadership

Over twelve seasons, Stephen captained Mayo GAA, an experience that shaped his leadership values, including humility, resilience, work ethic, and collaboration. He explained: "Working alongside high-performers taught me to balance discipline, confidence, and the humility to seek help. These qualities are key for team leadership – on the pitch and in business."

In his current role as General Manager of Senus, Stephen applies these principles in the tech-agri sector, guiding teams with a focus on corporate governance and strategic impact.

## Academic Synergy: MBA Meets PhD

Stephen holds a PhD in animal nutrition and reproduction, underlining his analytical capabilities and commitment to research. He noted: "My PhD sharpened my capacity for deep analysis and discipline. The MBA allows me to step back and view the agri-tech sector through a strategic and commercial lens – essential for long-term visioning."

The combination of doctoral expertise and MBA business training positions him for senior leadership roles across food, agriculture, and sustainability sectors.

## Why the University of Galway Executive MBA?

Stephen was attracted to modules including *Managing the Digital Enterprise, Responsible Management, Cybersecurity for Managers, Corporate Finance, Governance, and Storytelling for Leaders*. International exposure through the Fordham University pathway trip was also influential.

"Interacting with peers from diverse sectors enriches my learning and challenges my thinking. It's a privilege to be welcomed into the University of Galway alumni network," he stated.

## Future Ambitions: Growth, Innovation and Impact

Stephen aims to lead organisations at the intersection of agriculture, food, technology, and sustainability. He views the MBA as a platform to transition into senior leadership roles both nationally and internationally. Drawing on global networks and a high-performance mindset, he seeks to contribute across boardrooms and startups.



## Social Purpose and Community Legacy

Beyond professional objectives, Stephen contributed to the Warriors for Humanity "Plant the Planet" initiative in Kenya, where over 50 GAA athletes participated in planting one million trees. The initiative supports food security, restores degraded land, and generates income for local communities.

Locally, Stephen remains active in his GAA club, Hollymount Carramore, coaching and mentoring emerging leaders and contributing to his home community.

## Words to Live By: Values That Drive Leadership

Stephen emphasises teamwork, integrity, and dedication as core leadership values: "A legacy built on a team-first mindset – honesty, humility, respect, and belief. I want to show others that choosing the harder path, like pursuing an EMBA alongside professional and personal commitments, produces lasting benefits."

Stephen Coen exemplifies the calibre of student the University attracts: high-performing in sport, research-informed, leadership-focused, and socially conscious. His MBA journey contributes to the School's academic and professional community, demonstrating the practical application of leadership across corporate and societal contexts.

**I want to show others that choosing the harder path, like pursuing an EMBA alongside professional and personal commitments, produces lasting benefits.**

# The Gaeltacht on Screen: Darach Ó Tuairisg — Celebrating Irish Arts, Film, and Television

Darach Ó Tuairisg, CEO and co-founder of Fíbín Media, is a media entrepreneur and a current Executive MBA (EMBA) student at University of Galway's J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics. He leads Fíbín, an independent production company focused on children's television, Irish-language storytelling, and international distribution. His decision to pursue the EMBA aligns with his professional objective to strengthen strategic decision-making and business management skills.

**While I have gained significant experience in growing a business, I wanted a structured academic framework to support decision-making and strategy.**

## Shaping a Media Company from the Gaeltacht

Fíbín Media, headquartered in the Gaeltacht region of Connemara, Co. Galway, produces television, film, and multimedia projects in Irish and English. Under Darach's leadership, the company has grown from four employees in 2018 to a team of 25, while indirectly supporting another 25 full-time equivalent roles in the sector. Fíbín's content now reaches over 80 countries, placing Gaeltacht-based media on a global platform.

Fíbín began in theatre, where Darach initially worked as a stage and screen actor, before moving into production. He produced projects such as *Saoi Faoi Shráid* (internationally *Gutterbugs*), Ireland's first Irish-language children's live-action series, which included a website, touring theatre show, and published book.

His latest initiative, Fíbín Films, focuses on drama and TV series for adult audiences, reflecting an objective to expand creative production in the West of Ireland. "The West of Ireland has potential to deliver high-end productions for international audiences using local talent and expertise," Darach notes.

## Advancing Leadership with the EMBA

Darach joined the EMBA programme at University of Galway to complement practical entrepreneurial experience with formal business education. "While I have gained significant experience in growing a business, I wanted a structured academic framework to support decision-making and strategy," he says. The programme has broadened his professional network, provided business frameworks, and clarified strategies for growth and internationalisation of Fíbín Media.

These academic pursuits inform his broader approach to the creative sector. "Growth of the sector in the region is crucial, and through Fíbín Media and Fíbín Films, I aim to contribute to that development," he explains.

## Crá: Irish-Language Drama on the Global Stage

A recent highlight is Crá, the first Irish-language drama to air on the BBC Network. It received an IFTA nomination and a Royal Television Society Award for Best Drama, with distribution in 68 countries, including the US. The production, initiated by TG4, was filmed in the Donegal Gaeltacht. "We wanted to present the Gaeltacht on screen, using its environment as a backdrop for storytelling," Darach says. The project involved collaborations with



local and international partners, demonstrating the capacity of Irish media in global markets.

## Transforming An Taibhdhearc and Supporting Galway's Creative Sector

From 2020 to 2024, Fíbín Theatre Company, Fíbín Media's sister organisation, managed An Taibhdhearc, Ireland's national Irish-language theatre. The company delivered 15 productions annually, including site-specific projects and international collaborations, reinforcing Galway's role as a cultural centre.

Notable among these was *An Fear Liath*, co-produced with partners from Friesland and Galicia, premiering at the Galway International Arts Festival. The production included community actors, Claddagh boats, and professional performers from across Europe, exemplifying Darach's approach to combining local culture with international reach.

## Advice for Emerging Creatives

Darach advises emerging filmmakers and theatre professionals to develop knowledge across production disciplines. "Understanding lighting, sound, and costume enriches perspective and skillset," he says. Networking, persistence, and versatility are essential in a growing sector such as Ireland's creative industry.

## Combining Creativity with Business Acumen

Enrolment in the EMBA programme at the J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics represents a strategic step for Darach Ó Tuairisg, supporting leadership development and growth of the creative industries in the West of Ireland. With Fíbín Media, Fíbín Films, and a commitment to Irish-language content, he continues to establish a professional model for creative entrepreneurship in Ireland.



# University of Galway Students Take 1st Place in Irish Tax Institute's Fantasy Budget Competition

Students from J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics have won 1st place in the Irish Tax Institute's Fantasy Budget competition. This achievement demonstrates the students' ability to apply critical thinking to practical fiscal challenges.

**Their work reflects the skills developed through the School's programmes, preparing students to contribute meaningfully to Ireland's economic landscape.**

This year's competition attracted over 600 students from universities across Ireland, all tasked with thinking like the Minister for Finance. In teams of three to four, participants analysed key Budget measures affecting individuals, Irish businesses, and foreign investment, before proposing their own policy.

The winning team – Mark Dempsey, Micheál Martin Walsh, and James Carroll – worked with lecturer Dr Maria O'Brien to produce a detailed and thoughtful submission. Their analysis focused on:

- **Extension of the Help to Buy Scheme until 2029**, supporting first-time homebuyers amid ongoing housing challenges.
- **Proposed changes to retirement relief on disposals within families**, affecting tax and succession planning.
- **Introduction of a participation exemption in Ireland**, aimed at attracting foreign investment.

Building on this analysis, the team proposed an incremental property tax to discourage speculative investment in residential property. Their approach sets a 0% tax rate on the first three properties owned, with progressively higher rates on additional properties. This measure seeks to address housing shortages by limiting speculative buying that drives up prices and reduces availability.

Mark, Micheál, and James are commended for their analytical approach and practical application of policy insight. Their work reflects the skills developed through the School's programmes, preparing students to contribute meaningfully to Ireland's economic landscape.

Other institutions were also recognised: University College Dublin took 2nd place with a proposal for a VAT exemption on counselling services, while Dublin City University secured 3rd place with a recommendation to reduce VAT in the hospitality sector. All participants demonstrated a high level of engagement with complex policy issues.

This result reinforces J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics' focus on developing talent that combines academic rigor with real-world awareness.

**I am incredibly proud of Mark, Micheál, and James for their thoughtful and innovative approach to some of Ireland's most pressing fiscal challenges. Their success in the Fantasy Budget competition reflects not only their academic dedication but also their ability to apply critical analysis and creativity in real-world contexts.**

**Dr Maria O'Brien**  
Lecturer





# University of Galway and EY Luxembourg Announce Partnership to Develop Future Business Leaders

J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics at University of Galway is proud to announce a new partnership with EY Luxembourg, formalising a well-established relationship that has already provided meaningful opportunities for students over many years. This partnership brings together academic excellence and global professional expertise, creating a dynamic platform to prepare the next generation of business leaders.

## Partnership Highlights

The partnership encompasses a range of initiatives designed to connect students with world-class expertise, mentorship, and real-world experience. Key elements include:

- Summer School in Alternative Investments:** Delivered in May 2025, this immersive programme brought together over 70 MSc Corporate Finance students and visiting participants for a week of masterclasses, mentorship, and industry-led sessions.
- Mentorship:** Direct guidance from EY Luxembourg professionals, offering students practical career insights and tailored support.

- Guest Lectures:** Engagements with industry leaders, sharing perspectives on finance, strategy, and the global business landscape. Embedded within the Management Accounting module, reaching over 550 undergrad students across BComm pathways, Law, and Business Information Systems.
- Internships and Work Placements:** Opportunities for students to apply their learning in professional contexts while gaining international exposure.
- Enrichment Activities:** Support students in developing advanced skills in finance and related fields via activities such as: employer of the week, student talk/workshop, employer skills session, employability training, and professional mentoring, all supported through the partnership.

This engagement will provide students with transformative opportunities to build confidence, entrepreneurial capacity, and industry-aligned skills.

## Building Momentum

The partnership was formally launched on 15–16 October 2025 at University of Galway, marked by a visit from Robert White, Partner – Market Leader – EY Luxembourg; EMEA Wealth and Asset Management Assurance Leader. During this visit, Robert delivered a guest lecture and participated as Employer in Residence, meeting students and sharing insights into global finance and leadership.

## Student Perspective

"The EY Luxembourg Summer School on Alternative Investments was one of the most valuable experiences of my MSc. A highlight was hearing from the CEO of Harrison Street, who shared practical insights into how alternative investments shape company strategies. Audit partners from EY Luxembourg provided an in-depth look at real estate as a niche but rapidly growing asset class, explaining its structures, risks, and global relevance. A key feature of the programme was the group investment pitch video, which was both challenging and rewarding, giving me the chance to practise presenting ideas as if to real

investors. The programme concluded with a highly practical CV workshop led by our module coordinator, who shared excellent tips, tricks and resources for the job market, making the overall experience both technically insightful and career focused."

– Cathlin Paul, MSc Corporate Finance Graduate, Class Representative 2024-25

## Partner Perspective

"EY Luxembourg has had the tremendous pleasure of collaborating with University of Galway for over 20 years now. This relationship has provided our Firm with a proud line of inquisitive, mature, and resilient graduates that have made a real difference in our business and for the clients we serve. University of Galway's commitment to industry collaboration, feedback, and continuous improvement are attributes we value in our relationship. These reflective qualities are also evident in the graduates we have had the pleasure to welcome to EY. We are proud to formalise our partnership with University of Galway and look forward to many more years of collaboration and success."

– Robert White, Partner – Market Leader – EY Luxembourg; Europe West Wealth and Asset Management Assurance Leader

## Shaping the Future of Business Education

This partnership underscores University of Galway's commitment to linking education with enterprise. By providing mentorship, real-world learning, and global perspectives, the collaboration ensures students graduate with not only academic knowledge but also the professional competencies to thrive in a fast-changing business world.





# Sustainability Leadership Students Gain Global Insights in Bologna

The first-ever cohort of students from the MSc Sustainability Leadership programme completed an international field trip to Bologna Business School (BBS) in Italy, marking the final phase of their studies as the first students to complete this degree.

Hosted at Villa Guastavillani campus, a 16th-century residence in Bologna, the immersive experience aimed to deepen students' understanding of global sustainability challenges and solutions. Students engaged with local companies leading sustainability transitions and collaborated with peers from BBS's Master's in Sustainability Transition Management.

Highlights included a session on agricultural transition with Professor Francesco Orsini, a tour of Eta Beta – a social cooperative combining handicrafts, agriculture, and arts with a focus on social inclusion – and a visit to Salus Space, a European Commission-supported project promoting migrant inclusion, intercultural welfare, and sustainable urban living.

Reflecting on the experience, one student said: "Being on the ground in Bologna has been eye-opening. Learning directly from organisations driving real change has given me fresh perspectives on embedding sustainability across industries and communities."

Thanks are extended to Bologna Business School for their hospitality. This field trip not only enriched students' learning but also marked completion of the MSc Sustainability Leadership programme at University of Galway.



Being on the ground in Bologna has been eye-opening. Learning directly from organisations driving real change has given me fresh perspectives on embedding sustainability across industries and communities.





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