

# Report of the President and UMT



*\*Photo courtesy of Professor Chaosheng Zhang, School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies*

ÚDARÁS NA HOLLSCOILE

25 DEIREADH FÓMHAIR 2023 | ÚO-23-A02-19

# Section 1

## Priority Updates to Údarás na hOllscoile

- University of Galway has been named as one of the top Universities in Europe, according to the **QS World University Rankings: Europe 2024**, placing us **98<sup>th</sup> in Europe out of 690 institutions** across 42 locations, and also placed in the **Top 50 for Sustainability**, ranking us 36<sup>th</sup>. This accolade follows the University ranked number one university in Ireland, and in the world's top 50, for progress towards the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings and becoming a national Sustainable Development Goals Champion.
- University of Galway recently announced a new partnership with the **National Breast Cancer Research Institute (NBCRI)**, with the charity committing a **€2 million** research investment fund over two years. The collaboration builds on a longstanding relationship between NBCRI and the University.
- University of Galway has been awarded **€1.3 million Performance Funding** from the HEA further to submission of a case study which outlines the pioneering and innovative work of the **Active\* Consent** programme. The Performance Funding 2023 awards were announced at the launch on 25 September 2023 of the **HEA's System Performance Framework 2023 - 2028**.

University of Galway is one of only 5 institutions awarded funding under the HEA initiative and the only one to have been successful in securing HEA performance funding in all four rounds of allocation, totalling almost €4 million.

- **Signature Partnership Agreement - University of Galway / Medtronic:** University of Galway and Medtronic PLC, a global leader in healthcare technology, have entered into a **five-year €5 million signature innovation partnership** focused on three pillars: developing the MedTech ecosystem, STEM and research. This marks the first signature partnership between University of Galway and industry and one of the largest corporate gifts in the history of our university. At the time of the writing of this report, the announcement is to be made at a special event at National University of Ireland in Dublin. In attendance: President, Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, CEO Medtronic, Geoff Martha, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris, and Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly.
- **Dean of Students: Professor Ciara Meehan** joined us on 4 September at the beginning of the new academic year as our new Dean of Students. Ciara was appointed after an external competition which attracted a very strong field. This is an exciting appointment to this important role for us and for our students. We welcome and support Ciara in her new role.

- Further to the IUA's submission to DFHERIS, the President attended a series of meetings in recent months, along with IUA Council members, with Minister Simon Harris, DFHERIS in relation to **Funding the Future** campaign and on infrastructure investment. Some €100million was allocated to the sector in core funding which still leaves a shortfall of €200million per annum. Minister Donohue mentioned the potential for the National Training Fund (which has €1.5billion unspent) to be allocated more broadly. We continue to work to ensure the investment in education which our students and our society deserve.
- The President and the HEA jointly signed the **Anti-Racism Principles for Irish Education Institutions** at an event on campus on 27 June 2023. Attending from the HEA were senior representatives from the HEA Centre of Excellence for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Dr Alan Wall, CEO of the HEA and Dr Victoria Brownlee, HEA Senior Manager in System Development and Performance Management visited the campus on 26 July 2023 to meet with the President, the Bursar, the Secretary for Governance & Academic Affairs and colleagues from the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences to discuss the **Expressions of Interest** process further to the HEA call to identify opportunities **to build capacity in healthcare programmes**.
- The President attended the **Audit and Risk Committee** on 25 September 2023 at which he provided UMT's collective and considered feedback and input on the Audit Plan 2023 - 2024.
- The first **All Staff meeting** of the academic year 2023 - 24 took place on 27 September. Topics included: **An Update on University Finances; Greener Commuting**; a Panel Discussion **Spotlight on Research - Building on Galway's reputation for medtech, creativity and marine**, with an opportunity for Questions and Answers.
- **Galway International Arts Festival (GIAF):** University of Galway continued to partner with GIAF as a major sponsor and support of the festival, being the exclusive 'Education Partner'. This year there was a very substantial University of Galway presence. Event space was provided at many locations throughout the campus with a significant footfall due to number of notable events:
  - The Festival Theatre – aka the **Kingfisher** – where there was a 70-person show in a 1000+ seat theatre, the largest ever theatre built west of the Shannon, and which brought in the region of 20,000 people to the campus.
  - **Bedbound**, starring Colm Meaney, in the **Bailey Allen Hall** with another 10,000 or people on campus.
  - Seven concerts at the Big Top in Fisheries Field, bringing another 20,000+ people onto our campus.
- The **ENLIGHT alliance** (consisting of 10 universities from 10 European countries, including University of Galway, **successfully secured 4-year funding of €14.4 million** European Commission funding.

- **Thriving in Academic Leadership:** Emerald Publishing has published the collective book *Thriving in Academic Leadership* (13 October 2023) which includes a chapter by the President, Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh. Other contributors include Vice-Chancellor of Murdoch University, Professor Andrew Deeks; former President of University of Windsor, Ross Paul; Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, Helen Mountfield KC; Professor in History, Brooklyn College, Swapna Banerjee; Director of the Centre for Health Systems, University of Otago, Professor Robin Gauld; Professor of Operations Management, Singapore Management University, Arnoud De Meyer; Vice-Chancellor, University of Cape Town, Professor Majokgethi Phakeng; former President University of Massachusetts, Professor John Lombardi; and retired President, Effat University, Saudi Arabia, Marcia Grant.

The book is a set of reflections for academics who aspire to leadership or are currently in leadership positions.

# Section 2

1. GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL ITEMS

2. OUR UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY: STAFF AND STUDENTS

3. COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

4. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

5. UMT MEETINGS - UPDATES FROM THE UNIVERSITY  
MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETINGS

# 1. GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL ITEMS FOR THE ATTENTION OF ÚDARÁS NA hOLLSCOILE

## 1.1 HR REVIEW – ACTION UPDATE

The HR Review Working Group which is working to progress the issues highlighted in the HR Review by PwC commenced its work during the summer and an action plan was developed under the six theme areas identified.

Overall, regarding the key items that were raised in the area:

- The draft **People Strategy** has been updated from the last round of feedback, the next phase is consultation with the UMT nominated policy review group, and with individual UMT members. An update will be discussed at UMT at its meeting (31<sup>st</sup> October) and to EDIHRC (23<sup>rd</sup> November) and Údarás na hOllscoile (18<sup>th</sup> December 2023).
- The **recruitment** backlog is now well under control, and internally within the recruitment teams have been reorganised with teams created to deal with **Research, Academic, Professional Service** streams of recruitment.
- **Policy reviews:** Policies have been reviewed and updated and will be reviewed for feedback by the policy review group over the coming weeks, and then to UMT for approval.
- The **University Performance Management Framework** has been launched, information sessions delivered, and currently reviewer and reviewee training courses are being delivered.
- The **culture and morale group** have been working with remarkable engagement of the team on the action plan and various social events have been planned.
- We are currently working on **process mapping the recruitment process**, with a view to engaging a Lean expert to train the HR Team on Lean processes and then to review the recruitment process with a view of eliminating any bottlenecks.
- Planned engagement with College Deans on the role of the **HR Business Partners:** The Director of HR is scheduling one-to-one meetings with the College Deans, and then with other UMT leaders that have a HRBP and those who do not, to consider the enhancement of the HR Business Partner services across the University.
- **Improving communications** within the HR Team with fortnightly emails and updating the team on activities, and ongoing work, with input is coming from the HR Managers.
- A **monthly HR Update All Staff email** is circulated to staff on various items from policy updates, wellbeing events, and training activities.
- A **HR Staff coffee morning for new staff** took place on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September for new staff who have joined over the past two years. The event was attended by over 100 staff, the President



and various staff networks also attended. This will become an event that we will run in the future in Semester 1 and Semester 2. The next event planned for Semester 2 is now being planned.

- A **UMT HR Review working group** has been formed. It has met once thus far and will support the overseeing of the action plans. This group will provide feedback and work with the Director of HR to design what the future HR Office will be to support University business.

## 1.2 CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND FACILITIES UPDATE

### **Dunlin (Student Accommodation Phase 2):**

This project is now complete and operational under the management of Atalia.



**Masterplan** this document is now complete and ready for presentation to the University Management Team.

**City Campus (Nuns' Island):** we have received funding under URDF 2 for a variety of projects on our City Campus and are in the progress on Planning for Law School at MacLoughlin Building, Medical Facility at Hygeia, Theatre and associated student facilities at Fisheries field, as well as upgrade and public realm at Fisheries field.

We have submitted a real estate review of **Persses Distillery** to the UMT. Options are under consideration at UMT level.

**Medical School:** We await funding confirmation through HESIF 2 for the proposed Medical School which is to be located at the Anatomy Building and will consist of a 40,000sqft 2-storey structure incorporating the existing structure. We await formal confirmation of the award and drawdown.

Planning has been received on the **Learning Commons** at University of Galway. At present, we are at detailed design stage, with enabling works tender and contractor re-qualification due by end of 2023.

There are 28 large development projects at various stages of assessment by the buildings development team; these involve consideration, feasibility, and design, which are conducted by the four members of the

PDU unit. This is a staggering workload for such a group and the Buildings and Estates team are anxious to agree prioritisation on projects as it is difficult to manage expectations across the campus.

**The HESIF quarterly report** issued to the HEA in September 2023. This report has advised the HEA of the decision to progress the alternative delivery option and has provided a status update on the procurement of the Project Team. Engineering works, Site Investigation works, Environmental surveys have completed for the most part on the selected Distillery Road site.

The **Clinical Simulation Project, Business Hub** and Aras Moyola are now commissioned.

A further phase of **Campus Flood Protection** works has been completed. This forms part of a wider flood prevention mitigation plan that has been rolled out on the campus over the past number of years and directly ties into the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management programme connected with the River Corrib.

The **facilities team** continues to do an excellent job, the physical works carried out and recent work around the conferring ceremonies was of the highest standard. The team has carried out some projects to support student non-commercial space; a number of these additions will be delivered in this quarter, including, outdoor meeting pods, upgraded garden areas with additional seating, drinking water bottle fill stations and outdoor classrooms.

**Safe Zone app** has been launched for the benefit of all staff and students. A lit route now runs from campus through Dunlin 2 and the park and ride and on to the Dangan sports ground.

We are working through over 176 project requests from across the community, these take the form of large, medium and small works, which all have their challenges and technical requirements. We are focusing on a sequence of accessibility projects including making all theatres accessible, installing additional automatic doors, upgrading the lift equipment at concourse, and a variety of other day-to-day works. Projects have been completed on the accessible bike parking, extending pathways and creating new disabled spaces, and pedestrianizing areas. These projects take time but there is a keen focus on accessibility across campus.

The team has been engaging with Galway City Council Tourism Head and Bord Fáilte to assess opportunities to tie campus improvement and development works with tourism opportunities up to and including Fisheries field project, merchandising and the active travel routes.

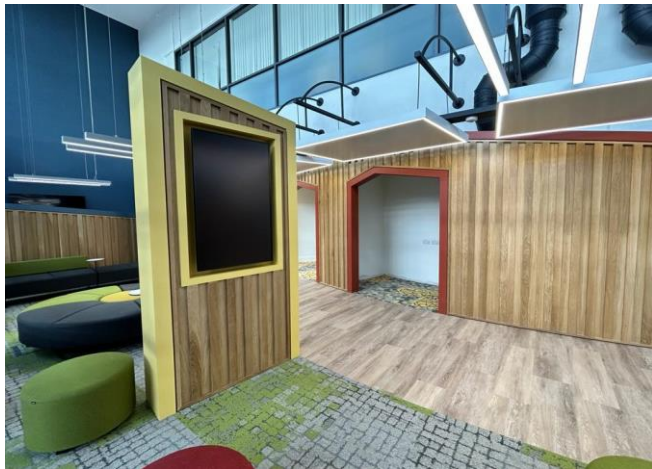
We have completed a student accommodation demand, supply study for the HEA, and are in process of creating a space utilization study across campus for same body.

Over the summer months the team has completed basketball court at Engineering green and pedestrianisation of the north to south route, the Sensory Room, Dean's Corridor at Science/Engineering, Biz Hub at Cairnes Building, Ideas Lab and Student Enquiry Centre on the Concourse, and added a significant number of student social seating spaces throughout campus.





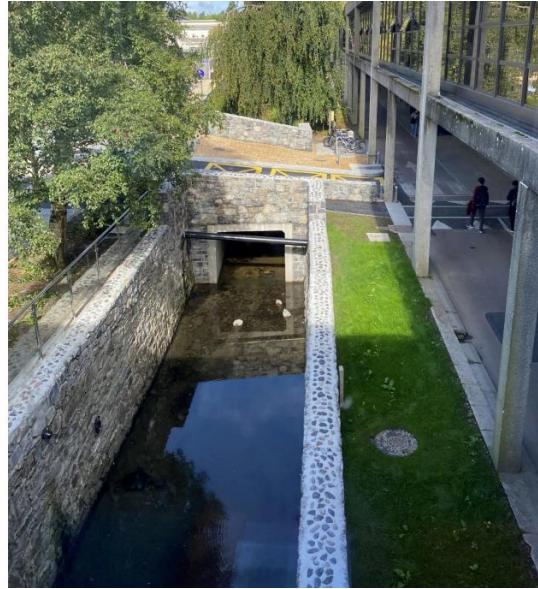
Sensory Room



Biz Hub – Cairnes Building

Excellent work has been conducted on the structures of the Anatomy building, the Quadrangle, CSI building and the Arts Science Concourse, this is work that goes unnoticed but ensures that the buildings remain operational. Works such as façade repairs, roof replacement and a variety of conservation works, such as window replacement, have been completed.

A large volume of work is in progress to retain the ISO certification on energy management and commencement of same on the health and safety function in buildings. We have retained the **Green flag** for the campus and we have also been awarded **Grade A standard for campus cleanliness by Galway City Council**.



Distillery Channel before and after.

### University of Galway's Monitoring and Reporting Glidepath 2006 - 2030

Since Energy Efficiency Baseline to 2022

Energy Savings: 49.6% lower

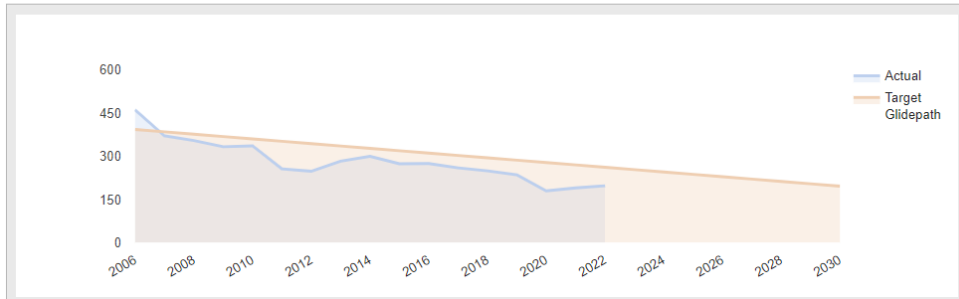


Change in Energy Consumption: 27.1% lower

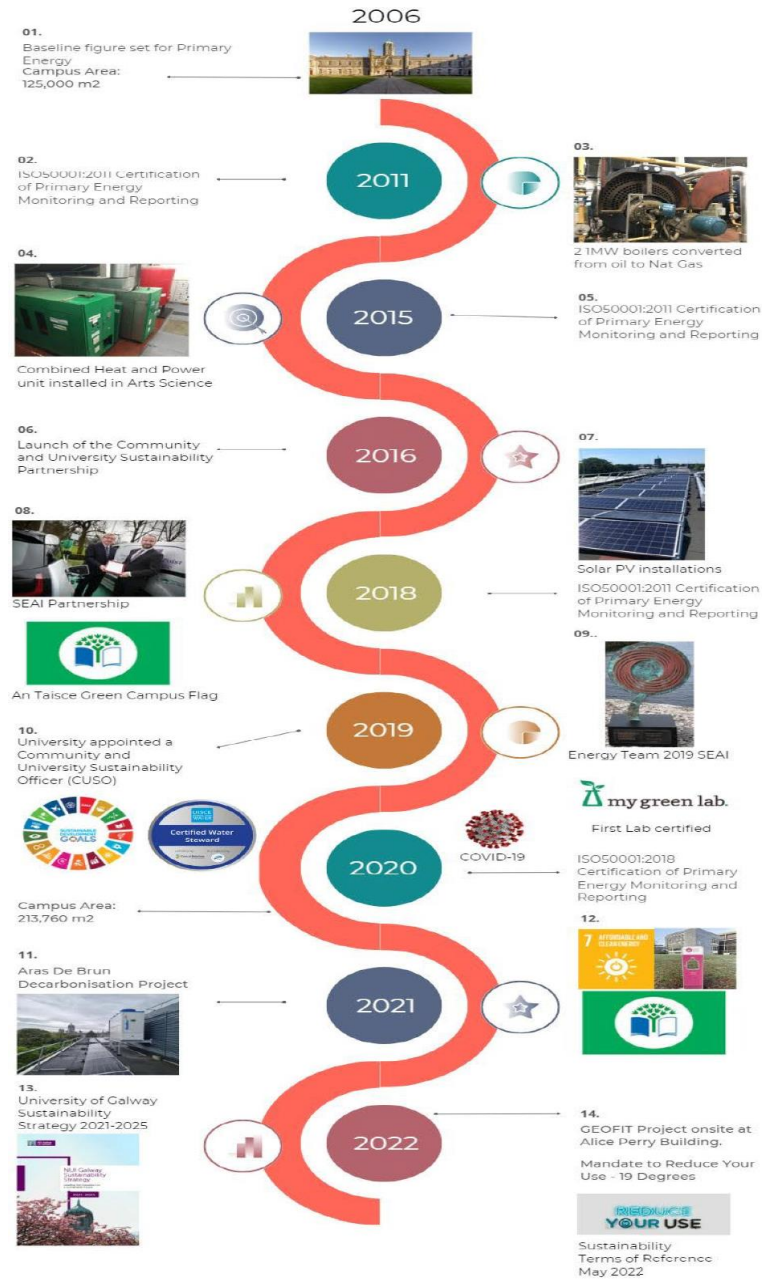
Energy Performance Indicators - 2022

2022 EnPI = 198  $\frac{\text{kWh}}{\text{Floor Area (m}^2\text{)}}$

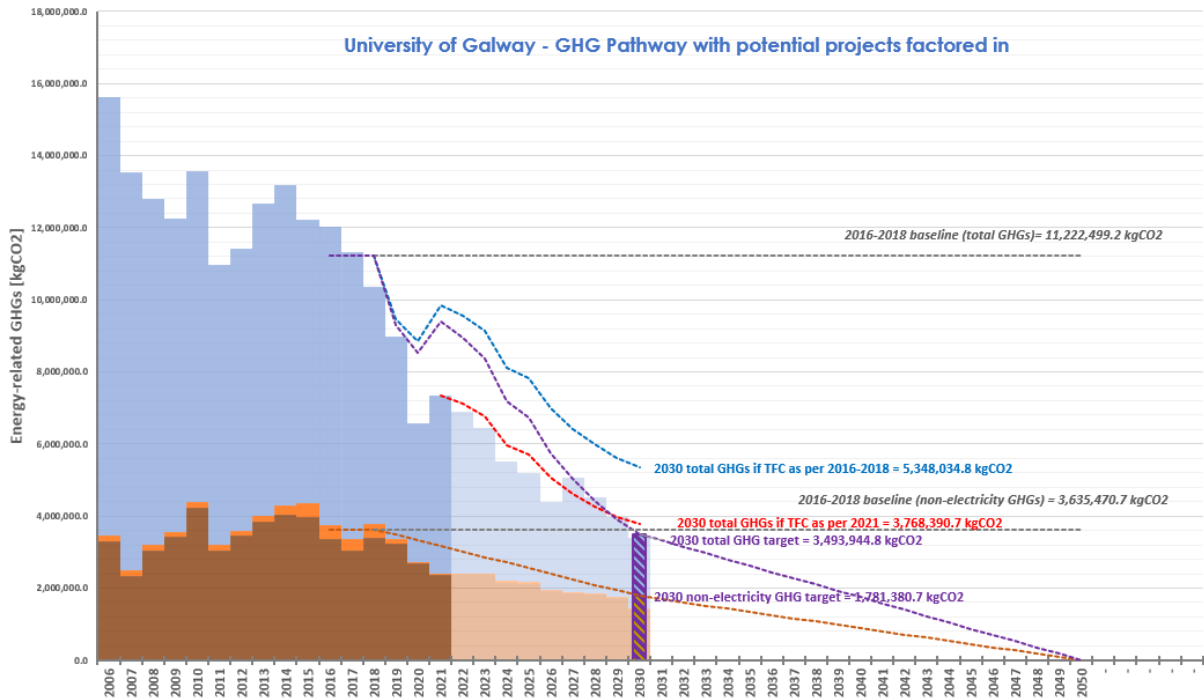
Target EnPI = 196  $\frac{\text{kWh}}{\text{Floor Area (m}^2\text{)}}$



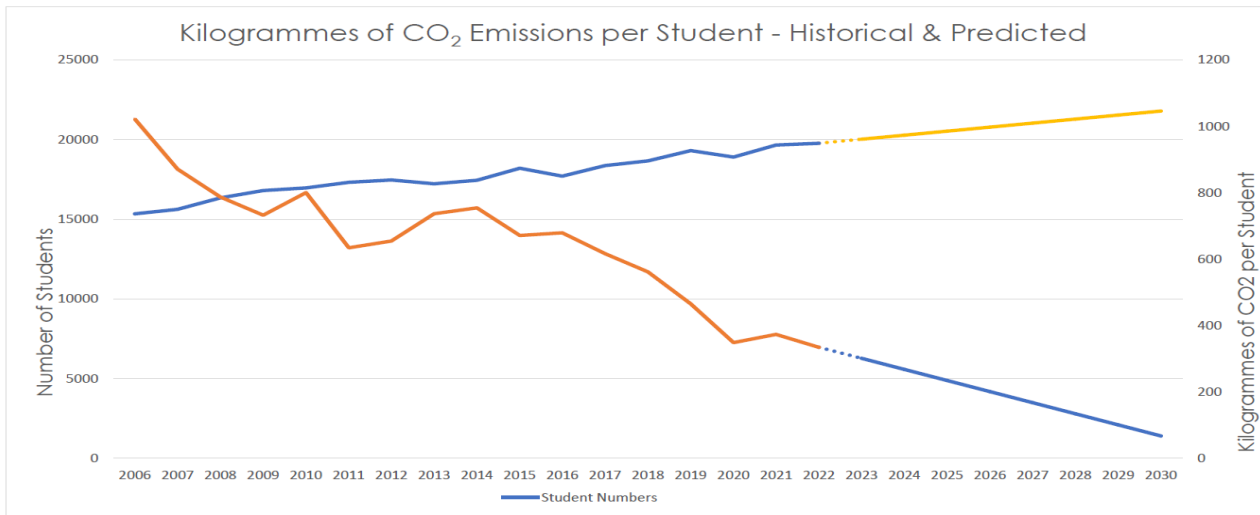
# University of Galway's Energy & Carbon related journey 2006 to date



**Energy & Carbon related GHG emissions reduction plan with potential projects underpinning our strategy.**



**University of Galway’s Kg of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per student 2006 – 2030**



**Courtyards’ Projects**

We revitalised the Arts Science courtyards. Sustainable composite social seating was installed where possible to encourage use by staff and students. There is a strong focus on pollinator friendly and sensory planting, and the mulch used in the courtyards is generated from our green waste. The overall aim is to create opportunities to connect students and staff to the natural environment for health and wellbeing.





### Social Seating Project

Built from polycarbonate domes the sustainable composite social seating and roof covered benches are used to encourage outdoor learning/teaching on campus. Many of these are located in courtyard areas beside buildings for convenience and shelter from the elements.







### Landscape Projects and the Green Flag for Parks and Landscape 2021/22

Landscape enhancements during 2021/22 include resurfacing of our Riverside Walk, replenishment of beds all over campus and a reimagining of the award winning Cardiovascular themed garden by Professor Derek O'Keefe at Bloom 2022.







### **Circular Economy Green Waste Project**

We introduced a circular economy initiative to take green waste such as grass, hedge cuttings and leaves collected from the grounds to our waste contractors composting facility. Here it is mixed with food waste from our restaurants to create an organic fertilizer which is used on the campus.



### **Electric Park and Ride Shuttle Buses**



The newly awarded park and ride shuttle service contract will benefit from two electric buses from the start of next term, September 2023.

## **Bike Parking Facilities**

To coincide with National Bike Week 2023, the University of Galway formally opened its bespoke bicycle parking for persons with impaired mobility, and family friendly child carrying trailers and/or cargo bike parking.

The project delivers on all pillars of the University Strategy, which are, Respect, Openness, Sustainability and Excellence. We strive for excellence and build on universal design principles in our developments across our campus and enhance physical access for all our communities and visitors alike.



## **Outdoor Gym's Across Campus**

The all-weather gyms were launched in 2022 and include exercise bikes, leg, chest and shoulder presses, rowing machines, cross trainers, walkers, and steppers and promote health and wellbeing.

### 1.3 UPDATE ON RANKINGS

#### New QS European Rankings 2024

On 20<sup>th</sup> of September 2023, QS Released their inaugural QS World University Rankings Europe and **University of Galway was ranked 98<sup>th</sup> in Europe** and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Ireland, out of 698 institutions across Europe, including 8 in Ireland:

QS Europe Rank	Rank 2024
TCD	31
UCD	71
<b>University of Galway</b>	<b>98</b>
UCC	109
UL	152
DCU	152
TUD	286
MU	311

This European focused rank uses similar metrics to the overall QS World University Rank 2024, but with some additional metrics measuring international diversity of the student body and international student exchange.

#### THE WUR Ranking 2024:

On 27<sup>th</sup> September Times Higher Education (THE) released their 2024 World University Ranking results.

**University of Galway remained in the rank range 301-350 this year out of nine institutions in Ireland** (same as last year).

Five of the Irish Universities all remained the same this year also, whereas TCD improved 27 places to a rank of 134 and University of Limerick also rose over 100 places to a range of 401-500. RCSI however declined into the lower range of 251-300.

This year THE introduced 4 new metrics around research quality (based off research citation metrics) and metric which were positive for all Irish universities, in particular TCD.

Institution name	Change	Rank 2024	Rank 2023
Trinity College Dublin	27	134	=161
University College Dublin	-	201–250	201–250
RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences	-50-100	251–300	201–250
University of Galway	-	301–350	301–350
University College Cork	-	301–350	301–350
Dublin City University	-	401–500	401–500
University of Limerick	+200+	401–500	601–800
Maynooth University	-	401–500	401–500
Technological University Dublin	-	1001–1200	1001–1200

## 2. OUR UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY: STAFF AND STUDENTS

### STAFF

- Congratulations to the **Pharmacology Laboratory** in the Human Biology who received **My Green Lab Certification** in July 2023. Platinum level certification was awarded after the implementation of a series of measures to improve the sustainability of practical teaching delivered in the laboratory. The team within Pharmacology and Therapeutics that led on this initiative were Dr Claire Feerick, Dr Danny Kerry, Coralie Mureau, and Professor David Finn, with much-valued guidance and support provided throughout by Dr Una Fitzgerald.
- The President and the VP for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion raised the Rainbow Flag on campus at the Quadrangle to mark **Galway Pride / Bród na Gaillimhe** on 9 August 2023. The flag-raising event was organised by the **LGBT+ Staff Network**.
- **Professor Martin O'Halloran** has been awarded a European Research Council (ERC) Proof of Concept grant worth €150,000. This latest accolade for Professor O'Halloran brings his total ERC awards to seven with a combined value of €4.25million in funding since 2015, making him the **joint-highest ERC awardee in Ireland**.
- In August, the **Biseach Initiative MoU** was signed. Cancer researchers at University of Galway and Notre Dame's Harper Cancer Research Institute have come together to establish the Biseach Initiative, a strategic cancer research collaboration which aims to build on the ideas, talent and infrastructure of both universities for global cancer impact.
- Four University of Galway researchers were presented with prestigious **Lero Director Prizes** at a special ceremony in August: **Dr Anastasia Griva** (Business Information Systems); **Dr Sally McHugh** (School of Education); **Professor Edward Jones** and **Professor Martin Glavin** (Electrical and Electronic Engineering).
- **European Research Council Grants: Dr Eoin McEvoy**, an Assistant Professor in Biomedical Engineering and **Dr James Gahan**, who takes up an Associate Professorship in chromosome biology in 2024, have secured prestigious grant awards from the European Research Council to pursue scientific research on evolution and breast cancer.
- **Professor John Morrissey** (Geography) has been appointed to the **InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) Panel on Human Security**, which is currently working with the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security and World Academy of Art and Science on a global campaign to promote Human Security For All (HS4A).

- **Dr Sheila Garrity** (Early Childhood Studies, School of Education, & Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development) has been appointed to the Advisory Committee on Early Learning and Childcare in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada by the Minister for Education, the Honourable Krista Lynn Howell. Dr Garrity will contribute to implementing the Newfoundland and Labrador Early Learning and Childcare Action Plan, in harmony with the Canada-Wide plan for Early Learning and Child Care.
- The President launched University of Galway's **Centre for Creative Technologies** on 21 September 2023. Supported by the University's Strategic Fund, the Centre fosters research and teaching activities that explore and develop links between creative practice and technology.
- **Academic and Research Integrity Conference** 4 – 6 October 2023: University of Galway hosted a major international conference on academic and research integrity, in partnership with the National Academic Integrity Network.
- **Professor Fidelma Dunne**: Professor Dunne's research on the **management of gestational diabetes mellitus** received widescale media coverage across October, further to publication of the results of the EMERGE project in **JAMA: the Journal of American Medical Association**.

## STUDENTS

- University of Galway welcomed its new **Students' Union Executive** in June 2023. President: Dean Kenny; Vice President/Education Officer: Raimey O'Boyle; Vice President/Welfare Officer: Izzy Tiernan; and Vice President for the Irish Language: Faye Ní Dhomhnaill, and other Officers. We wish them a successful and rewarding year ahead.
- In late June 2023, the Government announced plans for an additional 5,000 college places in medicine, nursing, pharmacy, dentistry and veterinary medicine which will begin to come on stream from next year. The Government also **approved three new healthcare degrees programmes** for University of Galway - **Pharmacy, Graduate Entry Medicine, and Graduate Entry Nursing** – which are in direct response to the needs of the healthcare sector and demand for staff, particularly in rural areas.
- University of Galway celebrated the conferring of almost 2,000 students at the **Autumn conferring ceremonies** (15 - 18 August 2023). A number of undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD degrees from across all four Colleges were presented.



- In early September, our new **Multi-Sensory Room** was launched by Adam Harris, founder and Chief Executive of Ireland's national autism organisation AsIAm. The Multi-Sensory Room was created to make the campus more inclusive and sensory-friendly.
- Approximately **3,000 first-year students** were welcomed to campus on 15 September for a series of special orientation events.

### **Sport at University of Galway**

- **The Walker Cup:** Fourth-year Biomedical Engineering student and golf star **Liam Nolan** was part of the Great Britain and Ireland Golf Team who took part in the Walker Cup Old Course in St Andrew's in September.
- Bachelor of Commerce student and amateur jockey **Billy Coonan** celebrated a win with the **Amateurs' Derby at Epsom** in August.
- **World Rowing Championships** (Belgrade, Serbia): The Women's Pair featured University alumna Fiona Murtagh and Aifric Keogh, who secured their boat a spot in the 2024 Paris Olympics by coming second in their semi-final.

## 3. COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

### 3.1 PUBLIC EVENTS / ENGAGEMENT

- The President officially opened the **14<sup>th</sup> International Disability Law Summer School**, hosted by the Centre for Disability Law and Policy (19 – 23 June 2023). This year's Summer School focused on the rights of children and young people with disabilities.
- The President welcomed the **Tánaiste, Micheál Martin**, to campus for the Government's **Consultative Forum on International Security Policy**, hosted in the Bailey Allen Hall at University of Galway on 23 June 2023. This was followed by lunch for the Tánaiste, Jackie McCrum, Secretary General, Department of Defence, Sonja Hyland, Deputy Secretary General, Department of Foreign Affairs, Bernie Maguire, Assistant Secretary, Department of Defence, Sharon McGowan, Tánaiste's Advisor and colleagues from our School of Law and Irish Centre for Human Rights.
- The first **Regional Dialogue** meeting coordinated by DFHERIS was hosted at the Aula Maxima on 23 June 2023. The theme was 'A More Unified Tertiary System'. In attendance were education leaders from Galway, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo along with DFHERIS representatives.
- On 4 July 2023, the President addressed a celebratory hybrid event between Iveagh House in Dublin, University of Galway and Marine Institute: **Atlantic Ocean – Our Shared Resource Marine Research**, celebrating a decade of marine research cooperation along and across the Atlantic Ocean. The event was co-organised by the European Commission, the Irish Government, the Marine Institute and University of Galway.
- On 5 July 2023, the President moderated an event at the **Mary Robinson Climate Conference – Youth Leaders for Global Challenges** in Ballina. Students from St Louis' School in Kiltimagh reported on their climate action project and young people from Comhairle na nÓg Mayo, Ballina 2023's Youth Assembly, the National Youth Assembly and the Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss attended. Speakers included Mary Robinson, US Ambassador to Ireland Claire Cronin and French Ambassador to Ireland Vincent Guérend.
- The President gave the welcoming address at the seminar – **Research and Impact on Policy, Lessons learned and Future Directions**, led by **Dr Fergal Lynch** (Senior Lead, Government and Public Policy Engagement, Institute for Lifecourse and Society) at the Aula Maxima on 20 July 2023. An expert panel from our research community shared their insights as to how they navigated the path to policy: **Professor Caroline McGregor, Professor Pat Dolan, Professor Saoirse NicGabhainn, Dr Elaine Toomey and Professor Stephen Hynes**.

- The President opened the **Science of Science Policy Workshop** at University of Galway on 3 August 2023 and coordinated by Professor John McHale. The workshop was attended by Professor Philip Nolan, Director General, Science Foundation Ireland and included a series of workshops and presentations presented by the PI's funded under the SFI Science Policy Research Programme and panel discussions on The Future of Science Policy and Science Policy Research and Star Recruitment as an Element of the Science Policy Mix.
- University of Galway's inaugural **SDG week** took place 18-23 September across campus to increase awareness, engagement and action to help achieve the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Events included a mix of student and staff-led events, from seminars to seed sowing, an environmental summit, poster presentations, workshops, a quiz night, a guided walk and a community recycling day.
- The School of Business and Economics hosted the **Irish Academy of Management Annual Conference** in September, co-chaired by Dr Majella Giblin and Dr Denise Holland. The conference theme was '**Sustainable Leadership and Management: Making a Global Impact for the Public Good**'. The conference concluded with the awards ceremony where **Professor Alma McCarthy** was the recipient of the prestigious **IAM Fellowship Award for 2023**.
- The **Cell Explorers Coordination team**, led by **Dr Muriel Grenon**, closed out a phenomenal academic year following a significant programme of activities. **In 2022**, the University of Galway team brought the Fantastic DNA workshop to **28 schools** engaging with **849 pupils in 32 classes**. CE engaged **410 young individuals and their families** during GSTF Exhibition Day and ran several other events including the Traveller Ethnicity week with Access, Engineering week family day, Cork Carnival of Science and CURAM Curious Young Mind summer. This work is made possible through the dedication of **98 team members, mostly undergraduate volunteers**, and some postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers and collaborators from the University.

In addition, the **Cell Explorers Network** has been coordinating the national network since 2015, currently 13 teams, as well as developing research on the impact of the programme.

### 3.2 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY

#### Brand Update

September 1<sup>st</sup> marked the first anniversary of the University's renaming. Over the summer, significant work was undertaken on University signage. With the new budget year, additional funding has become available to further embed the new brand across the campus and city. Further training of staff on brand will be rolled out in the coming months for those involved in content creation.

The recruitment campaign “**Galway’s the Place/ Is í Gaillimh an Áit is Fearr**” for the change of mind window outperformed previous recruitment campaigns for the University on any platform where we have comparable data. The campaign consisted of Out of Home advertising, radio, digital audio, search, online display and social media advertising. Engagement with prospective students was strongest on Snapchat and Tik Tok. The 23/24 campaign is currently in development and will be focused on the University’s contribution to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.

### **New Academic Year**

A multi-channel communications campaign was rolled out for the commencement of the new academic year with colleagues in Student Services. In the national media, University spokespeople were prominent on the major sectoral issues facing prospective students. President Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, Students’ Union President Dean Kenny and a number of University students spoke to [RTÉ Radio 1’s Morning Ireland](#), [RTÉ News Online](#), [RTÉ News at One](#), and [RTÉ Six One News](#) about student accommodation and the challenges facing third-level students ahead of the new academic year. Deputy President and Registrar Professor Pól Ó Dochartaigh expresses his concerns over Leaving Certificate grade inflation in [The Irish Times](#) and discussed this and CAO offers with [RTÉ Radio 1’s News at One](#), [RTÉ Radio 1’s Drivetime](#), [Newstalk’s The Hard Shoulder](#), and The Irish Times [here](#) and [here](#). For our internal audiences, issues ranging from the accommodation search to how to set up a campus email account were communicated internally and through our social channels, with an emphasis on engagement with first year orientation activities.

### **Digital Communications**

Social media engagement and following has grown over the past quarter, with engagement on Instagram, LinkedIn and TikTok, having increased by between 29% - 65%. The well-documented issues with Twitter are having an impact, with engagement reducing on that platform as our audience migrates to other platforms. The development of more frequent video content is a strain on limited resources but essential to deliver content our audiences will respond to. Vacancies within the marketing team have limited website development work over the period, with priority given to updating our audiences on news and events.

### **Partnerships**

The partnership with Galway International Arts Festival (GIAF) resulted in more on-campus events than ever before. The sports arena was transformed for The Pulse show, while Colm Meaney starred in the sold-out run of Bedbound in the Bailey Allen Hall. University staff were heavily involved in the First Thought Talks programme and led the post-show talks across the festival theatre programme. The SELECTED programme afforded unparalleled access for our students to learn about the delivery of the festival, while the volunteering programme was embedded in Áras na Mac Léinn. An alumni event was held alongside the Saw Doctors’ performance in the Big Top, while international mobile phone photography experts provided campus tours for visitors to the campus. Oral histories of the highlights were recorded by our University archivists. This partnership involved a lot of work from colleagues in Buildings & Estates, Commercial

Services, Creative Arts, Library Archives as well as the Engagement team. Content on our social platforms relating to the festival had almost 700,000 impressions (views), with an engagement rate of 3.8% (likes, shares, comments etc), which is significantly above industry averages.

The University's partnership with [the Conversation platform](#) resulted in the publication of articles on whistleblowing, AI in courtrooms and online abuse of female politicians.

Sixteen articles were published by University academics on [RTÉ's Brainstorm](#) platform over the period, on subjects as diverse as PSNI data breaches and the history of Irish budgets.

### **Additional Media Coverage**

Notable highlights of the University's media coverage over the period include:

- **Gestational Diabetes:** Researchers from the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences have taken a significant step forward in the management of gestational diabetes mellitus after a clinical trial involving pregnant women provided new hope for expectant mothers suffering the condition. More from [The Irish Times](#), [RTÉ News](#), [Irish Independent](#), [Irish Examiner](#), [Newstalk's The Pat Kenny Show](#), [RTÉ Radio 1's Drivetime](#) (@2.18.10), [Breakingnews.ie](#), [Irish Medical Times](#), [Medical Xpress](#), [MedScape](#), [Pharmaceutical Journal](#), [Health Economic Times](#), [Washington DC News](#), [Metro UK](#), [Independent UK](#), and [Science Daily](#).
- **Domestic firefighters:** Professor Jurgita Ovadnevaite, deputy director of the Ryan Institute Centre for Climate and Air Pollution Studies, led an international research project with colleagues in China and India, which has exposed previously unrealised health and climate impacts from the use of domestic firefighters. More from [RTÉ News](#), [The Irish Times](#), [Irish Independent](#), [RTÉ Radio 1's News at One](#) (@40.20), [RTÉ Radio 1's Today with Claire Byrne](#), [Bioengineer.org](#), and [Phys.org](#).
- **Sexual harassment at second level:** Research by Kate Dawson, formerly of University of Galway and now University of Greenwich, and Dr Pádraig Mac Neela, School of Psychology, revealed people's experiences of sexual harassment by teachers in school. More from the Irish Independent [here](#) and [here](#), [The Irish Times](#), [Journal.ie](#), [The Guardian](#), [Irish Examiner](#), [Sunday World](#), [Irish Mirror](#), and [Extra.ie](#).

**And Finally:** To mark World Mental Health Day, our students shared some [random acts of kindness on our Tik Tok channel](#)

## 4. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

### Key Funding Successes (May-Sept 2023)

*Note:* The projects listed below have been notified to us over the period Jun-Sept 2023. Contract/grant agreement negotiations may be ongoing.

#### 4.1 NATIONAL FUNDING PROGRAMMES

##### **Health Research Board**

###### *Secondary Data Analysis Projects (SDAP)*

Secondary Data Analysis projects are designed to bring together researchers, knowledge users and data controllers to develop research projects that answer policy and/or practice-relevant questions through the use of secondary data.

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
John Carney (Medicine)	Big Data Driven, Patient-Centric, Outcomes Scoring Tool Linking Multi-morbidity, Fracture, Hospitalisation and Death for Patients with Osteoporosis	€250k
David Keane (Medicine)	The 1st Comprehensive Analysis of the Burden of Kidney Failure in Ireland: 2010 to 2020	€250k

###### *Applied Partnership Award*

Applied Partnership awards are designed to bring knowledge users and researchers together to develop research projects that address a specific need within the Irish health or social care system.

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
Chris Noone (Psychology)	<i>No data about us without us:</i> Co-designing the Integration of Health Inequalities into the National Inpatient Experience Survey to Enhance the Participation of and Data about Marginalised Communities	€237k



Verna McKenna (Health Sciences)	Strengthening communications during patient discharge processes: Improving patient experienced quality of care and patient safety.	€239k
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*HRB Postdoctoral Fellowships: Clinician Scientist Fellowships (CSF) 2023*

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
Conor Judge (Medicine)	Approach to improving blood pressure treatment.	€711k

**Science Foundation Ireland**

*Challenges*

The Challenges Programme seeks solutions that will support a sustainable futures for Ireland's urban and rural populations. **The Programme gives academic research teams a unique opportunity to contribute to Ireland's transition to an environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy.**

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
Charlie Spillane/Galina Brychova (Natural Sciences/Ryan Institute)	Agri-Immanence: A generative AI/IoT enabled digital agronomy advisor for sustainability transitions of covered horti-food production systems	€250k
Myra Lydon (Engineering)	EMBRACE-Mobility: Equitable Management of Bridges for Resilient Accessible Communities to Ensure Mobility	€250k

*SFI/IRC Pathway Programme*

Co-funded by SFI and the Irish Research Council, the Pathway programme supports talented postdoctoral researchers from all research disciplines to develop their track record and transition to become independent research leaders.

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
Maria Schmygol (English & Creative Arts)	Foreign Places and National Identities in English Drama, 1560-1660	€416k

*RD&I Fellowship*

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
Rakesh Kumar (Biological & Chemical Sciences)	23/IRDIFA/11840 Bio-Interface development for application as electrochemical sensors for measuring analytes in blood.	€74k
Tania Palmieiro Sanchez (Biological & Chemical Sciences)	23/IRDIFA/11842 PHAs as delivery carriers for cattle feed supplements.	€78k

*FFP - Awards*

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
Jurgita Ovadnevaite/Ryan (Physics)	22/FFP-A/10611 Fingerprinting Climate Change and Air Pollutant Culprits (EPIC-AIR).	€1M

## **Irish Research Council**

### *Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Awards*

<b>Fellow/Mentor (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
Sogol Moradian (Engineering)	State-of-the-art early-warning flood prediction system for Ireland: design, implementation and computational modules	€105k

### *Laureate Awards – Advanced*

The Advanced Laureate Awards are targeted at established, leading principal investigators and provide funding to pursue ground-breaking, high-risk research.

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
Peter Corcoran (Engineering)	Privacy-Responsive Integrated computer Vision for Intelligent Safe sENsing and Situational Enhancement	€1M

## **Teagasc**

### *Walsh PhD Scholarships*

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
Vincent O'Flaherty (Natural Sciences/Ryan Institute)	Development of feed additives to reduce enteric methane emissions in grazing systems	€96k

**Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission**

*Access to Justice Baseline*

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
Charles O'Mahoney (Law)	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Article 13 Access to Justice Baseline Analysis Study	€15k

**Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine**

*Contract for Services*

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
Grace McCormack (Natural Sciences/Ryan Institute)	Research Services regarding the Native Irish Honey Bee ( <i>Apis mellifera mellifera</i> )	€102k

**Enterprise Ireland**

*Commercialisation Fund – Feasibility*

The **Commercialisation Fund (Feasibility)** Support is designed to fund researchers for a short (up to 3 months) project to scope the commercial case for an innovation/solution to determine its commercial viability in advance of submitting a standard Commercialisation Fund application.

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
Michael O'Dwyer (Medicine)	Nanoparticle delivery of a sialyltransferase inhibitor to restore anti-tumour immunity	€15k
Timothy O'Brien (Medicine)	Multifunctional Hydration System for 3D Bioprinting	€15k

## **Marine Institute**

### *Post-Doctoral Fellowships*

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
Audrey Morley (Geography, Archaeology & Irish Studies)	Marine Ecosystems Response to the Rapid Atlantification of the Nordic Seas.	€301k

### *Our Shared Ocean Programme*

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
Kevin Lynch (Geography, Archaeology & Irish Studies)	LOcalised ADaptation (LOAD) for Climate Change in Ireland and Timor-Leste: Co-Developing Frameworks for Nature-based Solutions.	€202

## 4.2 EUROPEAN & INTERNATIONAL FUNDING PROGRAMMES

*\*Denotes Coordinator*

### **European Funding Programmes**

#### **Horizon Europe**

*Pillar 1 –European Research Council*

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
<b>Starting Grants</b>		
Eoin McEvoy* (Engineering/Cúram)	MechanoGAP - Personalised Mechanobiological Models to Predict Tumour Growth and Anti-Cancer Drug Penetration	€1.5M
James Gahan (Natural Sciences)	ORICELLDif - Deciphering the origins of cell differentiation and developmental gene regulation in animals	€1.87M
<b>Consolidator Grants</b>		
Roja Fazaeli* (Law)	Building Conceptual and Methodological Expertise for the Study of Gender, Agency and Authority in Islam	€2M
<b>Proof of Concept</b>		
Martin O'Halloran* (Engineering)	NeuroProtect – A novel therapy to prevent Chemotherapy-Induced Peripheral Neuropathy	€150k

*Pillar 1 – Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) – COFUND*

MSCA are the European Union's reference programme for doctoral education and postdoctoral training. The COFUND action provides funding for interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral training and career development. Postdoctoral Fellowship awards support the career of individual researchers and promote excellence.

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
<b>COFUND</b>		
Kieran Conboy* (Business & Economics)	ROSETTA - RespOnSible Time and Tech in an Accelerated Digitised World	€1.8M
Abhay Pandit	Doctorate Career Development and Mobility Studentships in Medical Device Research and	€3.4M



(Engineering/Cúram)	Advancements: Enhancing the CÚRAM Industry-Academia Training Initiative	
<b>Postdoctoral Fellowships</b>		
Colleen Curran/Jacopo Bisagni*  (English & Creative Arts)	BretPal - Breton Palaeography	€224k

*Pillar 1 – Research Infrastructures*

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
Damien Martin  (Natural Sciences)	NUBICOS - New Users for a Better ICOS (Integrated Carbon Observing System)	€235k
Venkatesh Kannan  (Engineering)	MARINERG-I - Marine Renewable Energy Distributed Research Infrastructure (Preparatory Phase)	€229k

*Pillar 2 – Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness*

Pillar 2 aims to boost key technologies and solutions underpinning EU policies & Sustainable Development Goals. The pillar is established through clusters of research and innovation activities.

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
<b>Cluster 1 - Health</b>		
Maire Connolly  (Medicine)	RAPIDE - Regular and Unplanned Care Adaptive Dashboard for Cross-Border Emergencies	€1.35M
Pat McGarry  (Engineering/Cúram)	GEMINI: A Generation of Multi-scale Digital Twins of Ischaemic and Hemorrhagic Stroke Patients	€603k

Daniel O Toole (Medicine)	BEATSep - Biomarkers established to stratify sepsis long-term adverse effects to improve patients' health and quality of life	€510k
<b>Cluster 2 – Culture, Creativity &amp; Inclusive Societies</b>		
James Livesey (OVPRI)	PACESETTERS - Powering Artistic and Cultural Entrepreneurship to Drive Climate Change Transition	€468k
<b>Cluster 4 – Digital, Industry &amp; Space</b>		
Lukasz Porwol/Ed Curry (Engineering/DSI)	OPENVERSE - OPEN and co-created metaVERSE for Europe	€288k
Jamal Abdul Nasir (Computer Science)	AI4Debunk - Participative Assistive AI-powered Tools for Supporting Trustworthy Online Activity of Citizens and Debunking Disinformation	€247k
<b>Cluster 6 - Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture &amp; Environment</b>		
Marie Mahon (Geography, Archaeology & Irish Studies)	SERIGO Social Economy for Resilience, Inclusion and Good Life in Rural Areas	€330k
Anthony Grehan (Natural Sciences)	REDRESS - Restoration of deep-sea habitats to rebuild European Seas	€620k
Olivier Thomas (Biological & Chemical Sciences/Ryan Institute)	COMBO - Innovative cultivation methods for marine biodiscovery	€566k

*Pillar 3 – Innovative Europe-Pathfinder*

Pillar 3 addresses innovation performance, innovation transfer and innovation scale-up in Europe. It seeks to stimulate market-creating breakthroughs and ecosystems conducive to innovation.

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
Manus Biggs (Engineering/Cúram)	CELLMEMBRANE - Development of delignified nanocellulose-based gas transfer scaffold membrane for artificial lung applications	€568k

### **Other European Programmes**

#### *ERASMUS+*

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
Bernadine Brady (Political Science & Sociology)	Mentoring for Social Inclusion in Europe: Sharing Knowledge and Building Capacity	€78K
Nuala McGuinn (Centre for Adult Learning and Professional Development)	Potential of Microcredentials in Southern Africa	€48K

The ENLIGHT University Alliance has received ERASMUS+ funding for its 2<sup>nd</sup> phase. The total grant-aid for University of Galway is €1.7M. The activities under ENLIGHT include funding for the establishment of thematic networks in research and education, which can contribute to building research collaborations with our partners.

#### *EU4 Health*

The EU4Health programme was adopted as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and to reinforce crisis preparedness in the EU. The programme will bring a contribution to the long-term health challenges by building stronger, more resilient and more accessible health systems.

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
Dearbhaile Morris (Medicine)	Joint Action - Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare-Associated Infections 2.	€246k

### *LIFE*

The LIFE Programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action.

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
Stephen Hynes (Business & Economics)	Marine Protected Areas-LIFE-IRELAND.	€720k

### *Interreg Europe*

Interreg Europe is an interregional cooperation programme, co-funded by the European Union, to reduce disparities in the levels of development, growth and quality of life in and across Europe's regions.

Principal Investigator (School/Institute)	Title	Value (University of Galway)
Jessamyn Fairfield (Biological and Chemical Science)	Empowering NPA Communities by Implementing STEM Ecosystems as a Tool for Navigating Change.	€33K
Olivier Thomas (Biological & Chemical Sciences/Ryan Institute)	BEAP-MAR - Blue Bioeconomy in the Atlantic Area: New Products from Marine Organisms	€234K
Olivier Thomas (Biological & Chemical Sciences/Ryan Institute)	MARIONNET - Transnational RD&I cooperation network to foster the competitiveness and sustainability of the Blue Biotech sector	€186k

Pau Farras/Umair ul Hassan/John Breslin (Biological & Chemical Sciences/Engineering)	ENEPORTS - Decarbonization and Digitization of Atlantic Ports	€434k
John Breslin (Engineering)	ADT4Blue - Advanced Digital Technologies for the Blue Economy	€225k

### *Digital Europe*

The Digital Europe Programme is focused on bringing digital technology to businesses, citizens and public administrations.

<b>Principal Investigator (School/Institute)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Value (University of Galway)</b>
Simon Wong* (ICHEC)	HPC Skills Platform and European Collaboration for Training	€650k
Simon Wong (ICHEC)	European HPC Professional Traineeship Programme	€38k

## 5. UMT MEETINGS – UPDATES FROM THE UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT TEAM MEETINGS

- The **University Management Team (UMT)** facilitated a series of presentations and strategic discussions at its recent meetings including:
  - **Galway International Arts Festival Agreement update** (VP: Engagement) (27 June 2023 and 11 July 2023).
  - **University of Galway / Medtronic Signature Partnership** (VP: Engagement) (27 June 2023).
  - **Update on the Policies and Procedures Framework project** (Deputy President & Registrar/ Director of Quality) (27 June 2023).
  - **Institutional Athena Swan Action Plan – SWOT analysis of current status of actions -** (VP for Equality, Diversity & Inclusion / Race Equality Programme Manager) (27 June 2023).
  - **Presentation on Rankings** (Director of Planning and Institutional Research) (11 July 2023).
  - **Update on Strategic Risks** (Director of Strategy Implementation) (11 July 2023).
  - **Update from Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) and Audit Plan 2024** (Director of Internal Audit and Risk Management) (25 July 2023).
  - An update from the **Rebrand Steering Group** (19 September 2023).
  - **Race Equality Framework and Action Plan** (Race Equality Programme Manager) (3 October 2023).
  - **Update on HEA Strategic Performance Process 2023 – 2028** (Secretary for Governance & Academic Affairs) (3 October 2023).
  - **Next Strategic Planning Cycle** and establishment of the internal **Strategy Development Group** (Director of Strategy Implementation) (3 October 2023).
- A number of policies, amendments to policies and initiatives, led out by UMT members, have been discussed and approved at recent meetings.
- The UMT is regularly updated on the progress of the **Accommodation Task Force** and updates from the **Head of Buildings and Estates**, on **Health and Safety** matters from the **Safety Working Group** and **Safety Officers' reports**, on **Risks** and **Strategy**, on the **Energy Crisis** and our commitments to conserve energy, on key decisions taken at **Údarás na hOllscoile**, updates on the **Student Digital Pathways** project and briefings from our **Vice-Presidents**.