



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Sustainability Report

Academic Year 2023-2024

Leading the transition to a sustainable future

THE GLOBAL GOALS For Sustainable Development



Photo Credit : Dr John Caulfield



Photo by Prof Chaosheng Zhang

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Introduction

Welcome to the University of Galway Sustainability Report for the Academic Year 2023-2024. This year, we were very proud to hold the designation of National SDG Champion, appointed by the Government of Ireland. We used this role to great effect, championing the UN Sustainable Development Goals through an SDG Week of engagement activities, developing an SDG Trail on campus, appointing dedicated SDG focused student leaders and through many other initiatives that you will find detailed in this report.

Also this year, we established a dedicated Sustainability Office for the University. The role of the Sustainability Office is to empower the University's diverse communities of staff, students, and partners to co-create tomorrow's sustainable campus and deliver the SDGs. Reporting to the Deputy President & Registrar, the Sustainability Office comprises a Director of Sustainability, Community and University Sustainability Officer, Sustainability Accountant, Sustainability Administrator and works closely with two Lecturers in Education for Sustainable Development.

This was the third full academic year of our Sustainability Strategy 2021-2025 and we have already begun preparations for our next strategy. To that end, Section One of this report provides some key performance indicators under our six strategic theme areas: Research & Learning, Energy & Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Nature & Ecosystems, Built Environment, Health & Wellbeing, and Governance & Leadership.

Section Two of the report then demonstrates how our teaching, research, outreach and engagement activities are progressing each of the Sustainable Development Goals. Collected from our students, staff and community partners, these examples are a snapshot of progress; due to the breadth of sustainability initiatives across the university, it is not possible to include every project in the report. I would like to thank all the members of the University community who undertake these activities – you are true SDG champions.

A special word of thanks to Prof. Pól Ó Dochartaigh, who completed his term as Deputy President & Registrar this year. A leading voice for sustainability, Prof. Ó Dochartaigh chaired the Community and University Sustainability Partnership and was instrumental in the creation of the Sustainability Office. Thank you also to the outgoing Student Union President, Dean Kenny, and Students' Union Sustainability Officer, Molly Hickey, for their outstanding contributions. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Students' Union in the coming year, ensuring that students remain at the centre of our sustainability efforts.

We begin Academic Year 2024-2025 with a renewed sense of determinism to learn, live and lead sustainability. As we launch this report during our Second Annual SDG Week, we have transitioned from an SDG Champion to an SDG Ambassador, continuing to promote the Goals and lead by example. I look forward to working with CUSP, the staff of the new Sustainability Office and the wider University community in this most important of missions.

Dr Richard Manton
Director of Sustainability

University of Galway Sustainability Highlights AY 23-24



Launch of new **Sustainability Office**



Hosting of inaugural SDG Week
Celebrating the UN SDGs across campus 18-23 September 2023



2 new full-time lecturers in Education for Sustainable Development appointed

NO. 1

47th in the world in Times Higher Education Societal Impact Ranking 2024 making us the **most sustainable university in Ireland** by this measure



Designated national SDG Champion 23/24
First University in Ireland to hold this honour

Sustainable Living in action

51% energy efficiency achieved since baseline year

Launch of new **SDG Walking Trail**

New network of outdoor drinking fountains

Elimination of single-use cups

Our Journey Towards Sustainability



Photo by Prof Chaosheng Zhang

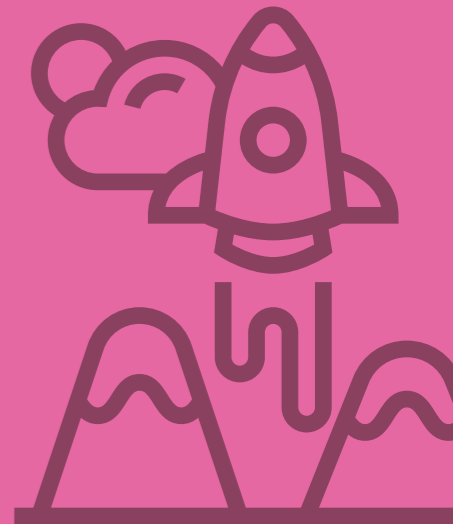
Vision

University of Galway will be a leader in the transition to a sustainable future. We will embed sustainability in our culture, operational policies and governance structures. As a bilingual university, we recognise that supporting linguistic and cultural diversity is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We will empower our communities to be champions of sustainability.



Mission: Learn-Live-Lead

Building on the work of CUSP, we will learn, live and lead sustainability across the university mission. The focus of learn is to continue to embed sustainability literacy into all aspects of University learning and research, the focus of live is to implement the principles of sustainability throughout campus operations and engagement activities; from a lead perspective the aim is to play a central and transformational role in attaining the SDGs by 2030. Our mission is organised around six themes: Research and Learning, Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Nature and Ecosystems, Health and Wellbeing, Built Environment, and Leadership and Governance.



Values

This Strategy is underpinned by the University's four core values:

- Respect – Respect for people, our purpose, our place and our planet.
- Excellence – We serve our region, our students and our society best through our high standards in research, teaching, support and engagement.
- Openness – We are open to the world, to cultural and to linguistic diversity. We also go out seeking new and deeper research co-operation, new ideas, new partnerships and new ways of engaging.
- Sustainability – We cherish our role as a university sustaining our communities and the next generation of citizens and of knowledge for our students and for our society.

Moreover, the work of this Strategy will be engaging, holistic and inclusive; students and staff will be at the heart of the sustainability journey.



Section 1:

Sustainability Strategy
Progress Indicators



Research & Learning

Sustainability in the Curriculum

The University has set a target that sustainability will be embedded in all degree programmes. As degree programmes are built from their constituent modules, to gain a snapshot of progress to date, we first assessed the extent to which sustainability is covered in modules. A keyword scanning method was used to identify whether a module potentially covered sustainability (the method and its limitations are [detailed online](#)). A sample of approximately one-third of University modules with learning outcomes was extracted from Akari, the curriculum management system.

Following the keyword scan, three members of the sustainability team reviewed the flagged modules and agreed a final list of 'sustainability modules'. We classified 226 of the modules as 'sustainability modules'. Further data collection and analysis is currently underway to provide a performance indicator for the full set of modules and degree programmes offered by the University. This will be complemented by new visualisation tools for sustainability in the curriculum.

Research on Sustainability

This indicator uses SciVal (Scopus) data to assess the quality and impact of University of Galway's research towards 16 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The latest data is available in the [Planning & Institutional Research Office report published in May 2024](#), which covers publications from 2018 to 2022. We would highlight that this is not a complete reflection of University of Galway's contribution to the SDGs as much of our research, particularly in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, is not captured in the Scopus database.

In 2022, 1,143 of the University's 2,532 research publications related to the SDGs, i.e. 45%. The chart opposite shows that this proportion has increased from 34% in 2018 to 45% in 2022. University of Galway has a particularly strong publication record related to SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) with 45% of the University's SDG-related publications aligning with this SDG.

The University's top output by number of publications for the past 5 years is SDG 3 (Good Health & Wellbeing), SDG7 (Affordable & Clean Energy), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure) and SDG 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation).

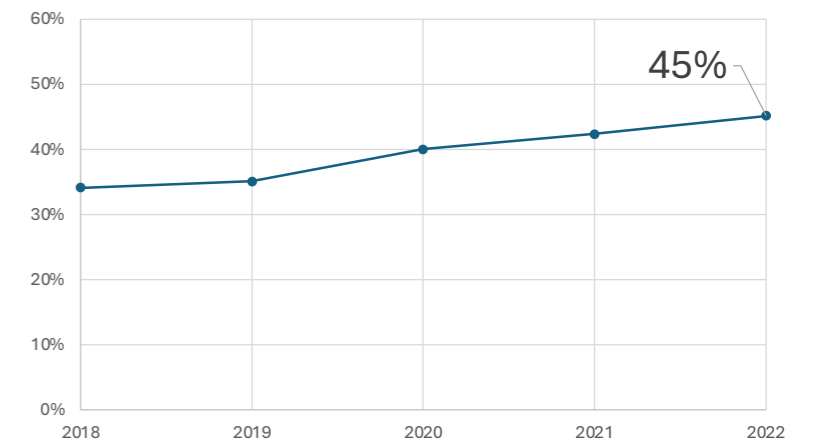
Highlight: New Lecturers in Education for Sustainable Development

Two new Lecturers in Sustainability and ESD work with academic and professional support colleagues to ensure that the SDGs, sustainability, the climate emergency, and related environmental issues are embedded across all of our degree programmes, undergraduate and postgraduate, and that our staff (academic and professional support) are provided with professional development in these topics as well as in aspects of appropriate pedagogical approaches. They also engage in research and scholarship in areas relevant to sustainability. The Lecturers are members of staff of CELT and work in close partnership with the Sustainability Office and CUSP (particularly the Research & Learning WG).



226 Sustainability modules

(based on a sample of one-third of modules)



SDG-related research publications



Energy and Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Scope 1 & 2)

Greenhouse gas emissions are measured in carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions. Scope 1 includes emissions from our fuel consumption, while Scope 2 includes emissions from the electricity we purchase. Scope 3 emissions (e.g. commuting, business travel and procurement) are covered in a separate [Carbon Footprint Report](#). Our [Climate Action Roadmap](#) outlines our progress on achieving public sector climate action targets.

The University has been monitoring GHG emissions since 2006, which were then valued at 15,625.3 tCO₂. In 2022, GHG emissions were 7,275.5 tCO₂. This is a 46.6% reduction between 2006 and 2022. For our public sector targets, the baseline value is set at the average of 2016-2018 emissions which is 11,222.5 tCO₂ for the University. The 2022 figure represents a 35% reduction on the baseline. This demonstrates the significant progress made to the target with major emissions reductions achieved since 2014. In 2022, electricity represented 5,008.7 tCO₂ or 68.8% of GHG emissions, while thermal (mostly gas) accounted for 2,225.8 tCO₂ or 30.6%.

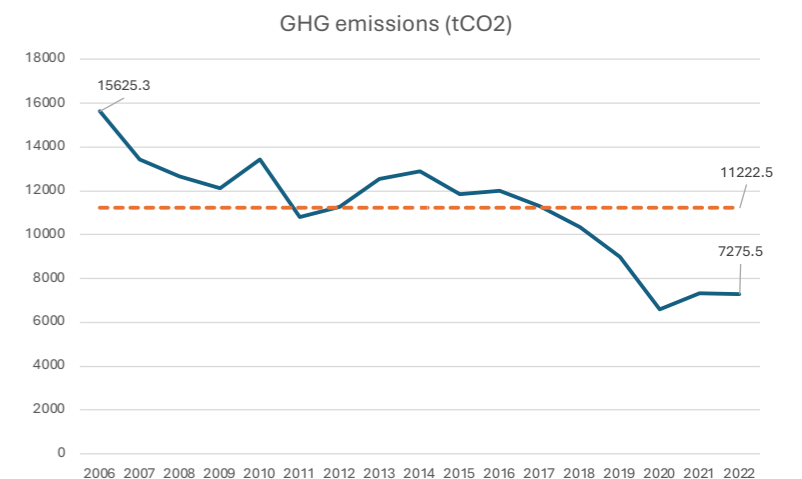
Energy Efficiency

In 2022, the University consumed 42.3 GWh of energy (68.5% electricity, 29.5% gas, 2% other). This is a major reduction in energy consumption since 2006 despite the fact that the University has been growing in terms of population and floor area. In 2022, energy consumption and GHG emissions were higher than in 2020. This reflects the return to full campus activity following the COVID-19 pandemic.

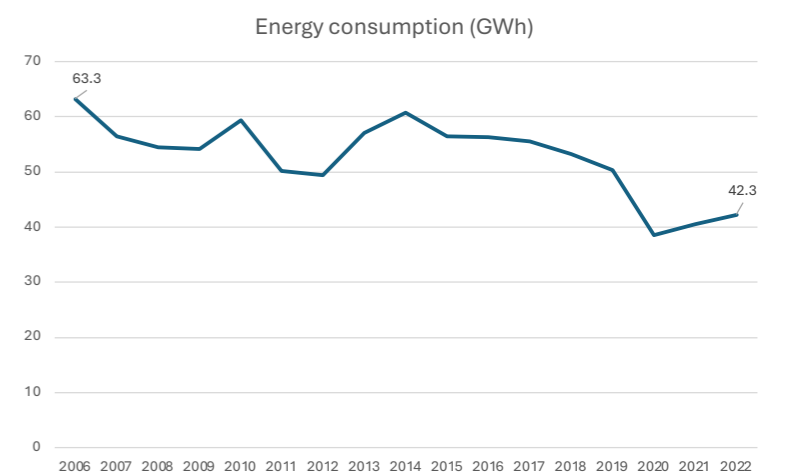
To account for this increased activity, our public sector targets are not based on an absolute energy consumption reduction, but rather use an activity-adjusted target, i.e. a measure of energy efficiency. This is known as the Energy Performance Indicator (EnPI). The Energy Performance Indicator is calculated by dividing energy consumption (in kWh) by treated floor area (in square-metres). The 2006 baseline EnPI is 463 kWh/m². The target EnPI is 196 kWh/m². In 2022, the EnPI was 198 kWh/m². This is 49.6% better than the baseline with just an 0.8% improvement required by 2030.

Highlight: Energy in Buildings Award 2023

In 2023, the University of Galway won the Energy in Buildings Award at the SEAI Awards 2023. The Áras de Brún Building, constructed in 1960, was a successful retrofit utilising numerous sustainable technologies achieving energy reductions and serving as a live research platform. This “Living Lab” research platform promotes further exploration of decarbonisation strategies and offers the academic community valuable insights and data. This is the third recent award for our Energy Team, following the SEAI Excellence in Energy Research & Innovation Award (2023) and SEAI Energy Team of the Year Award (2019).



GHG emissions 2006-2022 and baseline (2016-2018 average)



Energy consumption 2006-2022

Photo by Prof Chaosheng Zhang

Nature & Ecosystems



Photo by Prof Chaosheng Zhang

Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2025

The University of Galway Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2025 aims to increase and protect biodiversity across the university campus. The Biodiversity Action Plan is divided into sections: actions that can be done quickly and within 2 years, medium term (3-4 years) and long-term (5 years) actions which will take more time to plan, implement and monitor biodiversity enhancement action. Work is currently underway to measure progress on the Biodiversity Action Plan. The University is a signatory to or certified by the following schemes.

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

University of Galway is an All-Ireland Pollinator Plan Partner and developed a University of Galway Pollinator Plan to help create a campus environment where pollinators can thrive.

Green Campus

University of Galway is a Green Campus, awarded by An Taisce and the international Foundation for Environmental Education. This flag demonstrates that the University is committed to continuous environmental improvement and cross-campus community collaboration.

Green Flag Award for Parks & Gardens

University of Galway has also received the Green Flag Award for Parks & Gardens, recognising the ongoing improvements we are making to our green spaces on campus.

Irish Business Against Litter Survey

University of Galway achieved a Grade A for the standards of cleanliness and upkeep of the campus as part of the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) survey 2023. Carried out by An Taisce, the IBAL review takes place each year with spot checks across the country and thousands of cities are ranked for their appearance, the presence of litter and the impression created for visitors and tourists. The IBAL report scored University of Galway's campus a Grade A.

Highlight: New Organic Garden

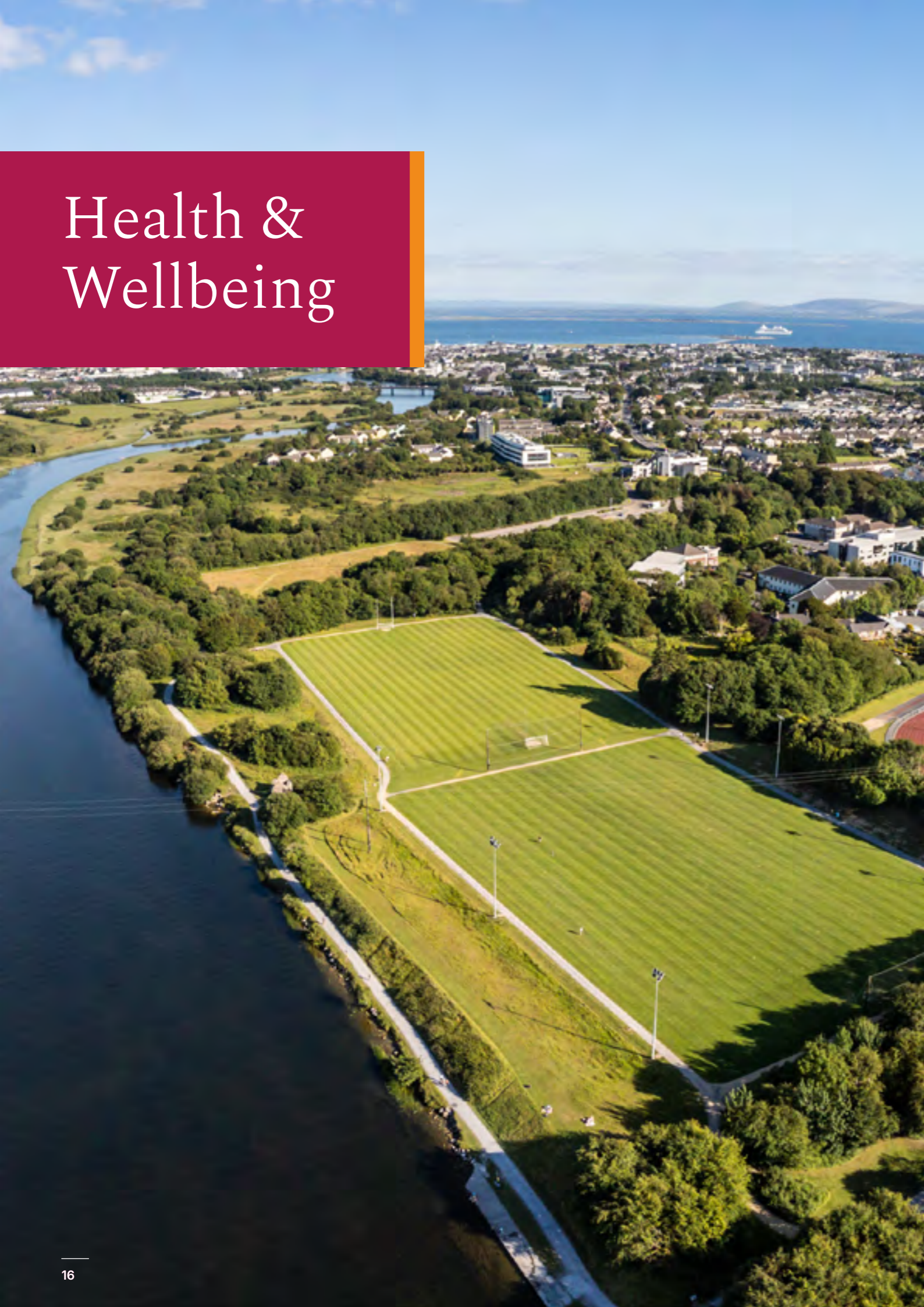
The Organic Garden enables students and staff to grow their own fruit and vegetables in a sustainable and organic manner. The community of gardeners get the chance to meet like-minded people, enjoy the mental and physical benefits of working in an outdoor space and, of course, enjoy the vegetable-shaped benefits of their labour. This year, the organic garden was relocated to the Arts-Science Building. The University of Galway Environmental Society won the 'Best Green Initiative' at the Board of Irish Societies (BICS) Awards 2024 for their work on the organic garden.



The Herb Garden at the Orbsen



Health & Wellbeing



Keep Well

Keep Well is a wellness accreditation scheme based on 8 standard: Leadership, Absence Management, Smoke Free, Physical Activity, Health & Safety, Mental Health, Healthy Eating, and Intoxicants. The University was awarded KeepWell Accreditation at Commitment Level in 2021. By 2025, the HR Office plans to elevate our accreditation from Commitment Level to Excellent Level.

Healthy Campus

The **Healthy Campus Framework** offers guidelines to third-level institutions to build on existing wellbeing actions and assists with the integration of health and wellbeing across the whole campus including teaching and learning, student supports and services, staff development, policies. Healthy Campus at the University is managed by Student Services.

Smoke Free

The University of Galway Sustainability Strategy targets a Tobacco Free Campus. There are currently two Smoke Free Zones on campus: South Campus (covering Hardiman Building, Library, Arts Millennium Building, School of Psychology and Main Concourse entrance) and North Campus (covering Engineering Building, Áras Moyola, Cairnes Building and Research and Innovation Centre). A designated smoking shelter is provided in each of the two zones.

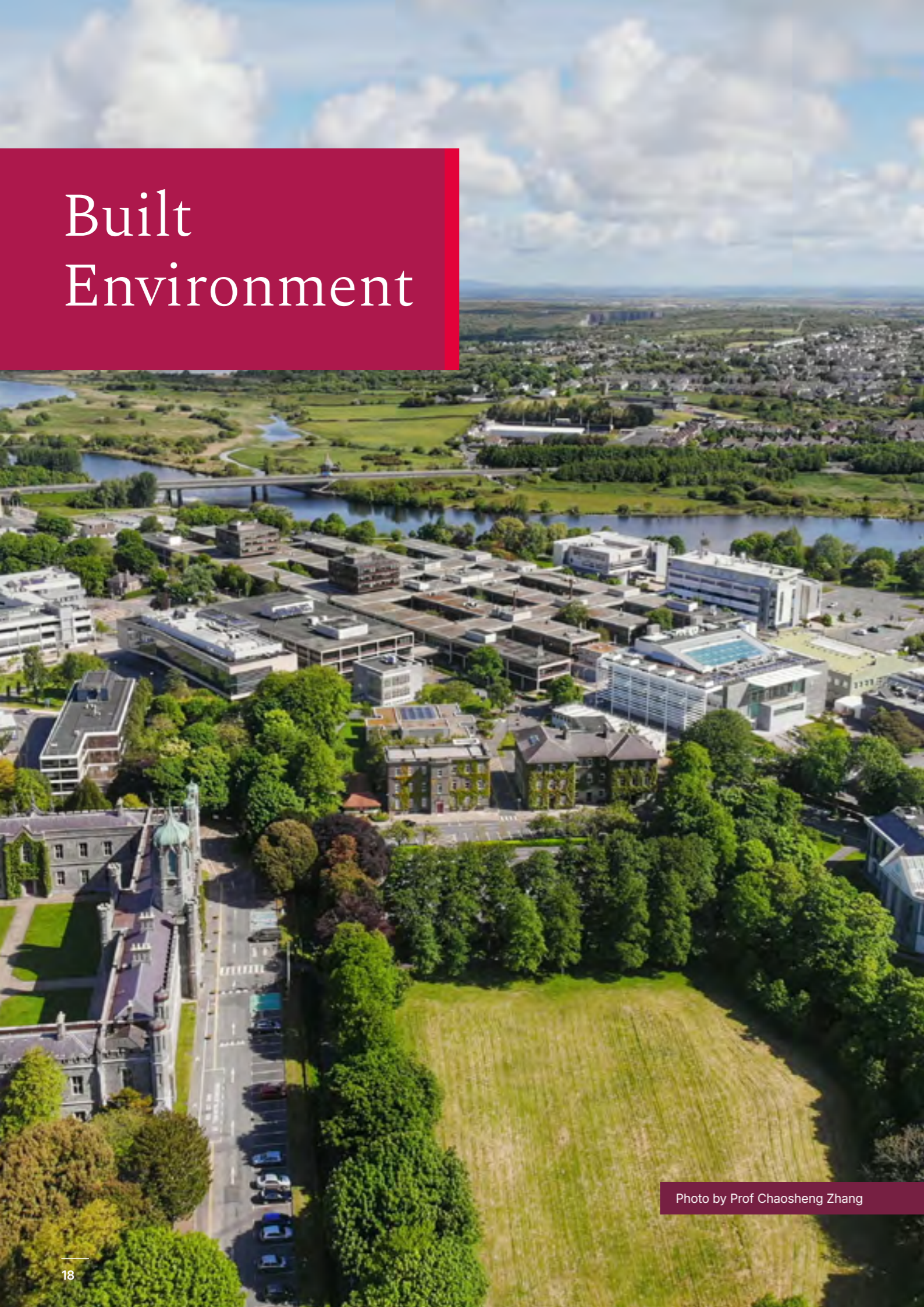
Highlight: Outdoor gyms and Parkrun on campus

Two new outdoor gyms were opened on campus. Located at College Green and across from the Arts Millennium Building, these gyms are part of the wider Sports for All initiative that aim to provide fitness facilities to students, staff and visitors to our campus. One quarter of the equipment has also been designed to accommodate the needs of individuals with a physical disability. Meanwhile, a University of Galway Parkrun also started this year. This is a free, fun, weekly, 5km community event – organised by volunteers for the benefit of everyone. The Parkrun follows the scenic route of the river Corrib along the campus grounds.



Hundreds of University of Galway students taking the plunge as part of Coldvember. Photo Credit: Andrew Downes





Built Environment

Photo by Prof Chaosheng Zhang

Commuting

This indicator is based on a travel survey with 2,136 responses (1,359 students and 777 staff) in January 2022. The survey was aligned with a similar survey conducted in November 2015. For students, the main mode of commuting to campus is walking (42%), while for staff the main mode is driving a car (67%). In total, 74% students and 31% staff use sustainable modes to campus. Comparing the modal share results for 2015 and 2022 (see charts opposite) shows a significant increase in the proportion of students using buses and trains with accompanying declines in walking and cycling. This may be explained by the increase in travel distance: in 2015, 58% students travelled less than 5 km to campus, however, by 2022 this had fallen to 38%. Further detail on the [2022 Travel Survey](#) is available online.

Water

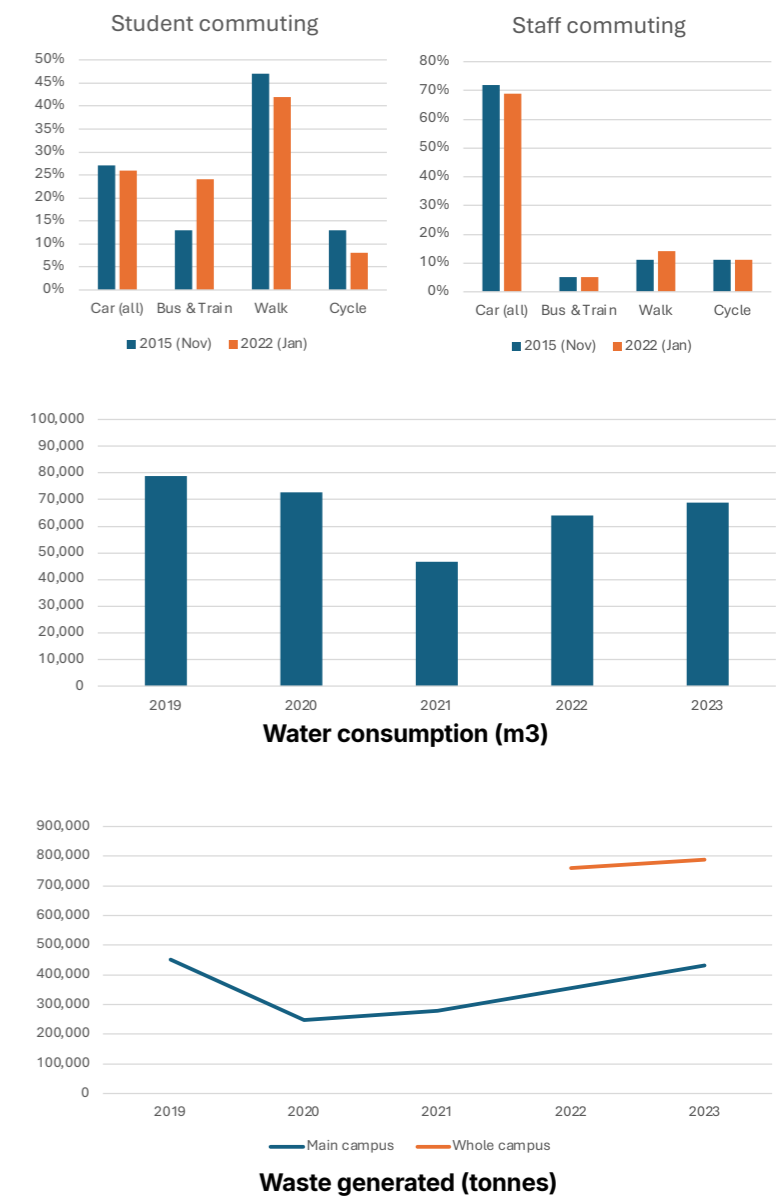
The University of Galway sets a target of a 10% decrease in water consumption and our [Water Stewardship Charter](#) outlines our key actions and targets. The Charter commits to maintaining and achieving further reductions in water usage on campus and to highlighting the importance of water of as a critical and limited resource. In 2019, water consumption on campus was 78,950 m3. This fell to 46,795 m3 during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 and has since returned to 68,747 m3 in 2023. Comparing 2023 to 2019, water consumption is 15% lower than five years ago.

Waste

The University of Galway recycling target is 55%. As of 2023, this has been achieved on the main campus (59%), but not on the campus as a whole (51%). While significant progress has been made with catering outlets (69% recycling rate), student residences (31%) remain a challenge. In 2019, 451,533 tonnes of waste was generated on the main campus; in 2023, this figure was 430,924 tonnes – 5% lower. The primary waste contractor (Barna) extracts valuable material from the general waste stream and send the remainder to waste-to-energy. Waste data and reports are available from the [Buildings & Estates website](#).

Highlight: Accessibility works

Buildings & Estates undertook significant works projects to create inclusive and effective learning environments for members of the community with physical disabilities. These works included new paths and frontage around the Quadrangle and nearby buildings, lifts in the Hardiman Building, motorised doors to access An Bhalann, lecture theatre accessibility in the Arts Science Building. Further university accessibility works are planned, prioritising access to teaching venues.



Governance & Leadership

Community & University Sustainability Partnership

The Community and University Sustainability Partnership (CUSP) was established in 2015 under the direction of the Deputy President & Registrar to showcase how a university can become a role model for the transition to a more sustainable future. CUSP operates via a multidisciplinary board of over 30 students and staff - the CUSP General Board. The CUSP General Board meets 5 times per year and receives reports from working groups.

In 2024, the CUSP working groups were reviewed and restructured. A new working group was established on Sustainable Living, including activities on energy, travel, water, waste, and health and wellbeing. Each working group has a working group chairperson, who reports progress to the CUSP General Board on a quarterly basis. An invitation was extended to all University students and staff to express an interest in joining CUSP and the working groups.

University Sustainability Advisory Board

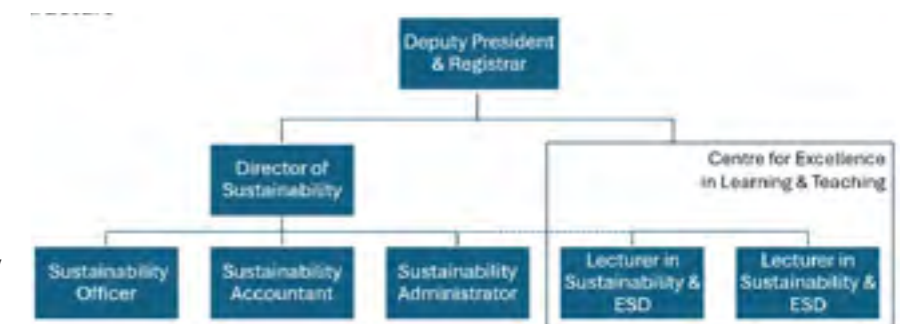
The University Sustainability Advisory Board provides strategic oversight of the University's commitment to sustainability, demonstrates leadership and recommends for approval and drives forward sustainability-related policies, procedures and action plans. The University Sustainability Advisory Board is chaired by the Deputy President & Registrar. CUSP, through the Director of Sustainability, reports bi-annually to the University Management Team and reports annually to the Udarás na hOllscoile Standing & Strategic Planning Committee.

New Sustainability Office

Established on Earth Day 2024, the Sustainability Office is a team of University of Galway staff that leads and promotes sustainability in all aspects of University learning and research, culture, operations and governance structures, and empowers our diverse communities of staff, students and partners to co-create tomorrow's sustainable campus and deliver the Sustainable Development Goals. The Office reports to the Deputy President & Registrar.

Highlight: Sustainability accolades for University of Galway

University of Galway secured the top prize for 'Excellence in Sustainability' at the Education Awards 2024 in recognition of progress in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Also in 2024, the Alice Perry Engineering Building became the first building on campus to be 100% Green Lab certified, showing the School's commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainable operations.



Sustainability Office structure

Photo by Prof Chaosheng Zhang



Section 2:

Progress on
the SDGs



SDG 1

End Poverty in all its forms everywhere



Photo Credit : Boyd Challenger

A Snapshot of Progress

- Universities of Sanctuary scholarships
- New business and science scholarships
- Laptop for Loan scheme
- UNI 4 U programme
- Developing research methods for populations in developing countries
- Lost & Found – Conveying the realities of homelessness told through the eyes of the homeless
- Glassary - a reuse and share initiative by University of Galway students
- Chairing a local credit union
- Civil society for disability rights
- Hygiene Hub donation drives



78 Scholarly Publications related to SDG1
(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)

8%

of University of Galway students come from disadvantaged areas
(HEA Deprivation Index Score Report)

Every year the University of Galway Students' Union selects charities that benefit from its fundraising initiatives. in 2023/24, €53,275 was raised by students



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Students and Learning

Universities of Sanctuary scholarships

The University of Galway offered 24 [Universities of Sanctuary Scholarships](#) for the AY23-24. Open to international protection applicants, refugees, Irish Travellers and vulnerable immigrant groups, the scholarships are available for both undergraduate and postgraduate courses across all four colleges. The scholarships include a full fee waiver, an annual stipend of €3,300, and ongoing support and academic mentoring. These scholarships are part of the university's [University of Sanctuary](#) designation which aims to broaden participation among under-represented groups and to challenge discrimination in education. Alongside the University of Sanctuary scholarship, University of Galway offered two refugee students Master's degree in College of Science and Engineering as part of the [EU-PASSWORLD project](#), which aims to create new, safe and legal routes for displaced people to secure education scholarships in Ireland.

New business and science scholarships

University of Galway has announced a [new partnership with Hygeia](#), an Irish gardening, agriculture, and veterinary production company. The partnership will provide Access scholarships and bursaries to students who are experiencing financial barriers to accessing third-level education. The ten-year partnership will be open to students across the University and will support student services to award funding to students experiencing hardship. The Hygeia Scholarship will include mentorship by Hygeia employees, supporting students through their academic and personal development as well as opportunities for work placements and internships so that students gain valuable skills and insight for their future careers.

Laptop for Loan scheme

158 University of Galway students benefited from the 'Laptop for Loan' scheme during AY23-24. Under the scheme undergraduate and postgraduate students can apply to receive a laptop on long-term loan; to assist with online learning, Applicants must provide evidence of socio-economic disadvantage. Eligibility is prioritised on a need's basis. Students from low-income households and the identified target groups who demonstrate that they or their family do not have the means to purchase such a device themselves, qualify to apply for the scheme. The scheme is intended to provide students from low-income households and students who would not traditionally be well represented at third level with equal access to a digital device and to reduce their financial burden.

UNI 4 U programme

[UNI 4 U](#) is run by the University of Galway Access Centre to support and guide students from under-represented and disadvantaged backgrounds in accessing higher education. The programme includes a range of activities such as outreach events, workshops, mentoring and information sessions that aim to demystify the university experience. In June 2023, University of Galway [presented certificates of achievement](#) to 174 Galway City primary school pupils who took part in this year's UNI 4 U programme. Over the course of 10 weeks, sixth class pupils took part in a range of activities and were given a taste of University of Galway campus and life. Workshops ranged from engineering, science, law, creative writing and zoology to the Irish language, coding and visits to the library archive. The UNI 4 U initiative began in 2005, stemming from the University's commitment in its strategic plans to advancing the social, economic, educational, and cultural needs of the Western region and more recently the National Access plan which aims to increase equality of opportunity and increase diversity across universities in Ireland.

Research

Developing research methods for populations in developing countries

A lecturer from the J.E Cairnes School of Business has co-authored a project in rural India to identify the best research methods for populations in developing countries. The project team developed verbal preference elicitation methods as substitutes for economic preferences like risk tolerance and honesty, measured through controlled experiments and follow-up surveys. Multiple questions were used to reduce measurement error. This study enhances poverty reduction efforts and contributes to SDG1 by refining research methods for more effective interventions in developing countries. In another project the team examined how healthcare professionals treat patients based on lifestyle and health conditions. They found that a low-risk lifestyle is rewarded, while chronic diseases elicit sympathy. Interestingly, lifestyle influences healthcare decisions more than health conditions, providing valuable insights into real-world healthcare decision-making. In a third study, the team examined honesty in men and women in leadership roles. Despite under-representation, the research suggests women are less dishonest individually but may act dishonestly as leaders when group expectations favour it. This work contributes to SDG5 by highlighting gender dynamics in ethical decision-making and informing interventions to support gender equality in leadership.

Lost & Found – Conveying the realities of homelessness told through the eyes of the homeless

University of Galway and Galway Simon Community have come together with filmmakers to produce a new film capturing the experience of homelessness from the experience of those who have lived it. *Lost & Found* is a co-created, virtual reality film produced out of the University's Centre for Creative Technologies, in collaboration with clients from Simon. The production saw people who have lived experience of homelessness working with leading virtual reality filmmakers and University of Galway researchers as part of the Immersive Empathy project. The team adopted a 360-degree style of filming, which captures a fully immersive world that can be viewed within a virtual reality headset. The production utilised oral history interviews and collaborative workshops to develop the content of the film so that it conveyed the realities of being homeless. The film was launched at a special screening at University of Galway as part of the Arts in Action programme with the audience wearing VR headsets allowing them to feel as though they are in the world of someone experiencing homelessness.

Community Engagement

Glassary Initiative by University of Galway Students

Glassary ("green glossary") is a University of Galway student-led sustainability initiative which reduces household waste generated across campus accommodation residences, whilst simultaneously providing support to local community and voluntary organisations. Donation points are set-up at student residences at the end of each semester, where students can then donate their leftover household items. These items are then collected and re-distributed to future students or local organisations. Alongside tackling SDGs related to the environment such as SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), Glassary also helps alleviate the effects of poverty (SDG 1) and provides our students an opportunity to become active with civic engagement. The delivery of Glassary at the end of Semester 2, 2024 was hugely successful with a significant donation made to a local homelessness-prevention charity, the Galway Simon Community. In October 2023, the Glassary initiative by University of Galway students was the winner of the very first ENLIGHT Global citizenship award.

Chairing a local credit union

A member of staff of the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics is chair of a local credit union, where their role is intrinsically linked to several SDGs. Credit unions, by their nature, focus on providing fair and accessible financial services to all members of the community, directly contributing to SDG 1 and SDG 10. By facilitating access to affordable credit, savings, and other financial products, credit unions empower individuals, particularly those in underserved communities, to manage their finances, start businesses, and improve their economic standing. This not only reduces poverty but also fosters economic resilience and equality.

Civil society for disability rights

Another member of staff is a former Commissioner of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission and founder and board member of several civil society organisations focused on disability rights. He continues to develop an international dimension to his work collaborating with colleagues and disability organisations in Portugal and the UK. Central to this work is exploring, drawing on the lived experiences of people, the dynamics of the effective delivery of personal support services for those whose circumstances mean that we, society, have a role in underpinning their basic human rights and dignity. For example, a recent publication [Accountability logics in disability service NPOs – Incorporating the role of service user advocacy in accountability and management control systems](#), aims to contribute to a greater understanding of non-profit organization (NPO) management control systems (MCS) and accountability in organizations providing support service for capacity constrained service users. Specifically, the paper examines the role of MCS and accountability in supporting mission realisation in NPOs providing services to people with intellectual disabilities and reflects on this in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hygiene Hub donation drives

The Galway Hygiene Hub is a local initiative designed to collect and distribute hygiene products to charities and individuals in need in the Galway community. This initiative focuses on addressing hygiene poverty which affects people who lack access to basic hygiene products such as soap shampoo toothpaste and sanitary products. University of Galway is a partner of the Galway Hygiene Hub and the Students Union hosted monthly donation drives throughout the year. The hygiene hubs donation partners in Galway include COPE Galway, Galway Simon Community, Galway Traveller Movement and Saint Vincent De Paul amongst others. By addressing hygiene poverty through the donation drives, University of Galway Students' Union is contributing to the overall wellbeing and dignity of individuals facing challenging circumstances.



SDG 2 Zero Hunger



DeSIRA PARTNERSHIP FOR INNOVATION
 Funded by European Union
 IFAD Investing in rural people

HỘI THẢO KỸ THUẬT DỰ ÁN HỆ THỐNG LƯƠNG THỰC THỰC PHẨM SINH THÁI
 VÀ TRÌNH CHUYỂN ĐỔI HƯỚNG TỚI CHẾ ĐỘ ĂN BỀN VỮNG TẠI THÀNH PHỐ HÀ NỘI
 ECOFOODSYSTEMS PROJECT TECHNICAL CONSULTATION WORKSHOP
 ENABLING SUSTAINABLE DIETARY TRANSITIONS FOR HANOI CITY

Hà Nội, 24/01/2024

Participants at the University of Galway led EcoFoodSystems Project Multistakeholder Research Prioritisation Workshop (Hanoi, 24th Jan 2024).

A Snapshot of Progress

- Sustainable Food Systems and the SDGs
- Integrating sustainable work practices at Shannon College using the Project Management Framework
- Key academic partner in an Ireland-UK research collaboration on climate and food sustainability
- University of Galway led global research team developing solutions for food systems in Vietnam.
- Public Service Fellowship Funding
- Catering on campus
- Positive Carbon Food Waste Management System
- The Student Pantry



133 Publications
 (Scopus Publications 2018-2022)



Our Masters in Agrifood Sustainability & Technology was announced as a finalist for the Best Masters Programme in the Irish Education Awards 2023.

The Environmental Society is spearheading a new Organic Garden on campus, growing an array of different organic fruits and vegetable. The Society welcomes members of the wider public to participate in the Garden. The community of gardeners enjoy the mental and physical benefits of working in an outdoor space.



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Students and Learning

Sustainable Food Systems and the SDGs

A free, in-person student and staff event examining the challenges contemporary food systems pose to human health and planetary health was delivered by the Sustainable World Section of the School of Biological Sciences as part of SDG week. Today's global food systems are responsible for one-third of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, immense biodiversity loss, environmental pollution and natural resource degradation. With about 750 million people facing hunger, 3 billion people unable to afford a healthy diet, and one third of the world's population affected by overweight and obesity, it is becoming increasingly clear that contemporary agrifood systems are also failing on human health. The event included experts from international development, food security, environmental engineering, marine resources, policy development and student voice. The discussion focused on the SDGs as a framework for structuring food systems change and, importantly, examined if all food systems actors have the appetite for change.

Integrating sustainable work practices at Shannon College using the Project Management Framework

Students at University of Galway Shannon College of Hotel Management were asked to develop a comprehensive project management plan to create a sustainable herb & vegetable garden within the available green space at the college. The garden was to serve as a resource for undergraduate students in the college kitchens while aligning with SDG 2. The output of this teaching initiative was three detailed student group submissions and comprehensive proposals/project management plans for the college to consider when developing its green spaces. The assignment submissions made by students are now being considered as part of the implementation of a Biodiversity Garden and in plans for ethical sourcing of food and supplies. A project that started with a focus on SDG 2 clearly demonstrated to students the interconnectedness of the UN SDGs. According to the course lecturer, "it was a rewarding experience to incorporate so many of the SDGs into the module, while using the PM framework as a lens to teach and develop the student's understanding of how to manage projects. While initially, we started with the focus on one or two SDGs, by the end of this module we touched on so many that will be of huge benefit in moving forward our sustainability campaign".

Research

Key academic partner in an Ireland-UK research collaboration on climate and food sustainability

University of Galway has joined a partnership of academics, industry and governments across Ireland and the UK, to advance research to address climate, food sustainability, biodiversity, and water crises. The developments are part of a new Co-Centres research programme announced by the Irish, British and Northern Ireland governments with a €70 million investment over six years. University of Galway's Ryan Institute is a key academic partner in the Co-Centre for Climate + Biodiversity and Water, and in the Co-Centre for Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems. The Co-Centre for Climate + Biodiversity and Water will carry out research to enable the transformative change urgently needed to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and water crises, as well as developing solutions on just transitions in land use. The Co-Centre for Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems will aim to develop innovative and transformative solutions to transition the food system for positive and sustainable change in the transition to climate-neutrality by 2050.

University of Galway led global research team developing solutions for food systems in Vietnam.

An international research team led by University of Galway is working in partnership with stakeholders in Vietnam to enable marginalised urban populations to be able to access healthier, more affordable, and more sustainable food and diets. The EcoFoodSystems project is conducting research on city regional dietary transitions with food systems organisations and institutions in the south-east Asian country. Vietnam has a population of 99 million – half of whom now live in urban areas. It is estimated that by 2050 three quarters of the country's population will be living in urban areas. This EU and UN funded project is specifically focused on working with partners to help improve the health of people and communities that are nutritionally marginalised because of their diets. EcoFoodSystems is led by the Director of University of Galway's Ryan Institute, in partnership with Alliance Bioversity - The International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT); Wageningen University and Research in the Netherlands and the international NGO Rikolto in Vietnam

Public Service Fellowship Funding

A University of Galway researcher from the School of Biological and Chemical Sciences has received funding through Science Foundation Ireland's (SFI) Public Service Fellowship programme to carry out research in food related areas including food safety culture and food hygiene rating systems. The Public Service Fellowship programme offers academic researchers the unique opportunity to be temporarily seconded to Government departments and agencies and work on specific collaborative research projects. The fellowships help to foster innovation and provide an evidence base for policy, through close collaboration and engagement within the public sector and academic research community. The researcher will complete a secondment with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland on the project. The application of behavioural science to influence food safety compliance' which aims to utilise behavioural science to provide insight in focus areas such as the food hygiene rating scheme, food safety culture, and regulatory enforcement

Community Engagement

Catering on campus

University of Galway is continuing its efforts to ensure that sustainably sourced, seasonal produce is available for use in meals served to students and staff on-campus. Four catering companies are contracted to operate the fifteen campus restaurants, and all are engaged in providing sustainable, healthy, and affordable food choices. One of the companies, Masterchefs, now operates its own farm guaranteeing organic, fresh, seasonal produce to their campus restaurants. Sodexo, who are the largest provider of catering services on campus, developed a bespoke nutritional guide for the campus community entitled Nutrition You in University of Galway. They provide a daily hot meal student special priced at €5 and they also offer vegan based salad bar as well as vegan hot food options. Recognising the diverse campus community, international cuisine is integrated within menus and international holidays are celebrated. Focus continues on minimising waste and many restaurants have now placed cameras in bins to identify sources of waste.

University of Galway is a founding member of the Irish Forum of International Agricultural Development (IFAD) and is leading the IFAD EcoFoodsystems project that is working to inform sustainable food systems transformations and dietary transitions in Vietnam.

Positive Carbon Food Waste Management System

The University of Galway Shannon College of Hotel Management is seeking to instil sustainable practices into every aspect of teaching and college operations. The College first collaborated with Positive Carbon in May 2023. An Irish start-up, Positive Carbon has developed a cutting-edge food waste management system. Through a carefully positioned camera, their system captures images and identifies discarded food, providing live data to the user. The technology affords our students insights through analysis of the data, enabling them to identify and target problem areas and challenges them to formulate solutions. While also allowing them to recognise the benefits of reduced costs through reduced waste and lowering environmental impact. The opportunity to work with a resource in class that delivers live data in such a user-friendly way has enriched students' learning. Being educated through sustainable practices and making it the norm means that working in a sustainable way is an inherent part of the culture & mindset of our graduates. Students gain the knowledge and awareness necessary to understand and implement sustainable practices in the hospitality industry. The Positive Carbon system underpins the Colleges commitment to sustainability within the college and the hospitality industry by exposing the managers of the future to best practice.

The Student Pantry

The Student Pantry at University of Galway is a student-led initiative, aimed at reducing food wastage and supporting students facing food insecurity. It operates as a food bank within the campus, providing essential food items collected from local businesses and organisations through Flood Cloud. The Student Pantry is supported by student volunteers creating a student driven effort. According to its founder, student Adam Mullins, "students availing of the Student Pantry are making food choices that are both environmentally and financially sustainable. The Food Pantry is combatting the poverty and housing crisis by reducing student living costs". During AY23/24, the Food Pantry expanded its operations, opening 2-3 times a week during the academic year and once a week during the summer months. From reducing financial burden to avoiding food wastage, encouraging volunteerism and fostering a sense of community, this student led initiative offers many benefits. As agreed at the Students' Union AGM in 2023, money has been ringfenced from the student levy for the continued operation and development of the Student Pantry.





SDG 3
Good Health and Wellbeing



A Snapshot of Progress 

- Bioinnovate fellowship programme
- Transition Year Taste of Healthcare programme
- New Healthcare degrees
- Establishment of new Institute for Clinical Trials
- Strategic Cancer Research Collaboration
- New set of therapeutics for the treatment of Triple Negative Breast Cancer
- Developing solutions to ensure the delivery of patient care in a health emergency
- Health Economics and Policy Analysis Centre
- Launch of new mental health art exhibition
- University of Galway Parkrun



2,587 Publications
(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)



Launched two new SDG 3 focused research centres, the Institute for Clinical Trials and the Ian Quinn Centre for Health Technology Innovation.

18%

45% of all University of Galway's SDG related publications are in SDG 3 and our output has grown by 18% over the past 5 years.



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Students and Learning

Bioinnovate fellowship programme

In May 2024, Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail Emer Higgins T.D. announced €7 million funding, over the next six years, for University of Galway's flagship Bioinnovate fellowship programme. Bioinnovate Ireland focuses on medical device innovation and healthcare solutions aiming to improve health outcomes. By advancing medical technologies and promoting health related research and development Bioinnovate Ireland contributes directly to ensuring healthy lives and pioneering wellbeing for all ages. The Bioinnovate fellowship programme is a training initiative designed to foster innovation in the field of medical technology. The programme focuses on identifying unmet clinical needs and developing innovative solutions to address those needs. The announcement coincides with the official launch of the Ian Quinn Centre for Health Technology Innovation, on the University campus, named in honour of the late Ian Quinn who was central in establishing Galway as a global medtech hub. The Ian Quinn Centre will build on the success of the Bioinnovate programme and the wider medtech and digital health community by providing co-working space, mentorship and global connections to emerging start-ups, as well as being a venue for industry, clinicians and campus-based innovators to come together and accelerate health technologies.

2

University of Galway is celebrating **2** academics on Highly Cited Researchers List 2023. Professors Afshin Samali (Cross Field category) and Patrick W. Serruys (Clinical Medicine category) join the prestigious list of almost 7,000 researchers from more than 1,300 institutions in 67 countries and regions who have demonstrated significant and broad influence in their fields through the publication of multiple highly cited papers during the last decade.

Transition Year Taste of Healthcare programme

The College of Medicine Nursing and Health Sciences has opened its doors to Transition Year students that are interested in pursuing careers in healthcare. Through the [Taste of Healthcare programme](#) students are given access to an immersive, interactive programme providing insight and experience into the world of inter-professional healthcare team and how they work together using the most advanced education and training techniques to ensure students are prepared for clinical practice when they graduate. Specially simulated medical procedures and scenarios are demonstrated, such as endoscopy, childbirth, and medical emergencies, giving students a real sense of the healthcare student experience. The programme showcases a wide range of skill sets across multiple disciplines including Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery, Occupational Therapy, Podiatric Medicine, and Speech and Language Therapy.

University of Galway secure Government support for new Healthcare degrees

University of Galway has secured Government [approval for three new healthcare degrees](#) with a specific focus on community-based care and addressing workforce needs in rural and regional areas. The three new healthcare degree programmes for University of Galway - Pharmacy, Graduate Entry Medicine, and Graduate Entry Nursing - are in direct response to the needs of the healthcare sector and demand for staff, particularly in rural areas. Government also approved the expansion of existing healthcare degree programmes at the University to ensure General Nursing & Midwifery has an intake of 24 students each year and the Higher Diploma in Midwifery has eight students each year. The three new degree programmes confirmed by Government will build to a student intake of almost 150 students a year. Graduate Entry Nursing will have places for 20 students per year; Pharmacy will have places for 40 students in year one and 75 students in each year following that; Graduate Entry Medicine will have places for 24 students in year one and 48 students following that.

Research

Establishment of new Institute for Clinical Trials

The University of Galway has recently established the [Institute for Clinical Trials](#). The research centre aims to transform the clinical research landscape in Ireland by creating an end-to-end programme for the development and delivery of clinical trials. The institute will utilise the University's clinical research experience in collaboration with healthcare partner Saolta to carry out clinical trials for cutting-edge medical projects, allowing patients to access the latest medicines quickly, as well as acting as a focal point for the development of sustained industry partnerships, boosting Galway's position as the MedTech centre of Ireland.

Strategic Cancer Research Collaboration

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. Director of the University of Notre Dame Harper Cancer Research Institute, and Director of the Saolta-University of Galway Cancer Centre, signed a memorandum of understanding at University of Galway to build interdisciplinary cancer research collaborations and strengthen links between both institutions through student and faculty exchange programmes. To date, there have been collaborative successes with joint Naughton Fellowships in the areas of bone metastasis and kidney cancer. Further research collaborations are planned with researchers in the Lambe Institute, Centre for Chromosome Biology, and the Apoptosis Research Centre at University of Galway.

Our world-leading research developing innovative treatments to progress SDG3

Researchers at University of Galway have created digital babies to better understand infants' health in their critical first 180 days of life. The research is published in [Cell Metabolism](#). University of Galway [reports](#) successful "first in human" clinical trial of pioneering guidance for heart bypass surgery. Neuroscientists at University of Galway have made an [exciting discovery](#) that could revolutionise stem cell-based brain repair therapy for Parkinson's disease. Our [heart disease research](#) challenges one-size-fits-all for aspirin guidelines. A University of Galway researcher has secured funding from the Health Research Board to [advance blood pressure treatment using artificial intelligence](#). Researchers at University of Galway 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, read more [here](#).

New set of therapeutics for the treatment of Triple Negative Breast Cancer

University of Galway will [lead an international research project](#) developing a new set of therapeutics for the treatment of Triple Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC). TNBC is a very aggressive and challenging cancer, affecting about 10-15% of women diagnosed with breast cancer. The cancer is highly aggressive and challenging to treat as it lacks hormone receptors, making targeted therapies ineffective. Consequently, treatment options for women suffering from the disease are limited to surgery and chemotherapy. The research project - Advanced Engineering of Nitric Oxide Based Therapeutics for Triple Negative Breast Cancer Training Network (No-CANCER-NET) - will focus on developing a new set of therapeutics for the treatment of TNBC. The project is supported by €2.7million Horizon Europe grant funding from the European Research Executive Agency. The research team is a collaboration between researcher at the University of Galway; University of Luxembourg; University of Udine; University of Sienna; Trinity College Dublin; EPHE-PSL; Danish Cancer Institute; ISOF-CNR; Saolta University Health Care Group; Galway Clinic; Houston Methodist Hospital; and other international partners

Developing solutions to ensure the delivery of regular and elective patient care in a health emergency

A new [research project](#) being pioneered by University of Galway is to develop solutions to ensure the seamless delivery of regular and elective patient care in a health emergency such as a pandemic. The [RAPIDE research project](#) (Regular and Unplanned Care Adaptive Dashboard for Cross-border Emergencies) is being undertaken following the award of a €6 million grant through Horizon Europe and involves a consortium of 13 partners from Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Italy, Slovenia, Malta and Estonia. One of the aims of the research project is to set new standards for fostering resilience and preparedness for future health emergencies, including how digital technologies can offer solutions for care in the home and outside of hospitals and clinics. Researchers will also measure the impact of delayed or unmet care during a health emergency such as a pandemic. The research will look back on the COVID-19 pandemic to measure the impact of delayed or unmet care for conditions such as strokes, heart attacks, diabetes, and cancer treatment. It will also assess the delivery of regular care across hospital, primary care, and home-based settings.



Insights into Children's Health Behaviours

Research by University of Galway has shed new light on the health behaviours of children and adolescents in Ireland, emphasising areas of progress and concern that require urgent attention. Commissioned by the Department of Health, the findings are from the latest Irish Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) survey conducted in 2022. More than 9,000 children, from a representative sample of 191 primary and postprimary schools nationwide, were asked to report on a series of questions related to their lifestyles, behaviours and experiences. The report (available here) presents data on general health and wellbeing, substance use, food and dietary behaviours, physical activity, self-care, injuries, fighting and bullying, and sexual behaviour. New items in this report include loneliness, sun safety behaviours, menstrual health and period poverty, and the impact of COVID-19 and its associated measures. Examples of positive findings include: there are decreases in both tobacco and cannabis use in the past 12 months; improvements across fruit and vegetable consumption; and fewer children report being in a physical fight than in 2018. However, the number of children who report not having breakfast has increased. In addition, there is an increase in the percentage of 12- to 17-year-olds who report using electronic cigarettes in the last 30 days. There is an overall decrease in general health and wellbeing, and this is particularly evident among older girls. There is also an increase in the percentage of children who report being cyberbullied, as well as an increase among those who report cyberbullying others since 2018.

Professor Sharon Glynn, University of Galway, leads research dedicated to developing a new set of therapeutics for the treatment of Triple Negative Breast Cancer. Credit – Martina Regan.

Health Economics and Policy Analysis Centre

The aim of the Health Economics and Policy Analysis Centre (HEPAC) is to develop, apply and teach methods for the economic analysis of health and health care. They have extensive links with clinical and social science researchers at the University of Galway, as well as being engaged in active collaborations with colleagues in national and international organisations. Researchers at HEPAC are currently applying health economic methods to explore a range of research questions relating to global challenges, sustainable development goals, and public policy needs. While the research is mainly of an applied nature with an emphasis on peer-reviewed academic output, members of HEPAC also engage and contribute to policy formulation in a range of areas at national and international level. Current research projects include those funded by agencies such as the Health Research Board, Science Foundation Ireland, and industry partners.



University of Galway President Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh enjoying our new outdoor gym

Community Engagement

Opening of outdoor gym

We are delighted to report the opening of two new outdoor gyms on the University of Galway campus. The two new on-campus gyms, located at College Green and across from the Arts Millennium Building, are part of the wider Sports for All initiative that aim to provide fitness facilities to students, staff and visitors to our campus. The outdoor gyms align with the university's Sustainability Strategy by providing an opportunity for physical activity on campus. The gyms offer access to a range of exercise equipment including exercise bikes, leg press, chest press and shoulder press, pull down rowing machine, cross trainers, walkers, stepper, hand bikes and shoulder wheel station, and seating areas and water fountains. One quarter of the equipment has also been designed to accommodate the needs of individuals with a physical disability.

Launch of new mental health art exhibition

An exhibition focused on mental health, Mindscapes, took place at the University of Galway between July 12th and August 2nd. The Mindscapes initiative is the first project from the Scientific Arts Lab at the University of Galway. Mindscapes featured artwork centred on the topic of mental health and mental health expression from 10 artists. Artists collaborated with 14 academic researchers from the Universities of Galway, Oxford, Edinburgh, Birmingham, and London. Artists selected a mental health topic ranging from wellbeing and bipolar disorder to sleep and emotions, and then collaborated with academics to create informed art pieces on their topic of choice.

University of Galway Parkrun

The University of Galway Parkrun launched in December 2023. This is a free, fun, weekly, 5km community event. It is organised by volunteers for the benefit of everyone. The inaugural run saw over 200 participants take to the starting line. The Parkrun follows along the scenic route of the river Corrib on the ground of the University of Galway campus. The Parkrun is a fantastic initiative promoting physical, social, and mental health and well-being.

iHealthFacts marks one year of debunking health claims

Researchers at University of Galway are delivering a project designed to tackle healthcare myths and help the public to quickly and easily check the reliability of popular health claims through the online resource [iHealthFacts.ie](https://ihealthfacts.ie). Using scientific evidence, such as trusted health sources and peer-reviewed studies, the research team analyses information to support or refute a healthcare claim. Over the last year, more than 4,500 users have visited [iHealthFacts.ie](https://ihealthfacts.ie); more than 150 questions have been submitted; and the researchers have assessed, answered or are analysing 60 claims about things that can improve our health. [iHealthFacts.ie](https://ihealthfacts.ie) is funded by the Health Research Board and the Health Service Executive and supported by University of Galway. Its aim is to help people to think critically about health claims and make well-informed choices. The public can submit a question at <https://ihealthfacts.ie> and read through the findings of the research into each health question.

Teddy Bear Hospital

The Teddy Bear Hospital is a community outreach initiative designed to alleviate children's fears of medical environments. Organised by the [Sláinte Society](https://www.galway.ac.uk/slaointe), University of Galway's health promotion society that focuses on promoting all aspects of physical and mental health; the event invites young children to bring their teddy bear or favourite stuffed animal for a check-up. During the event the children act as caregivers while the students playing the role of doctors perform mock medical procedures on the stuffed animals. This interactive and educational setup includes activities such as health check-ups applying bandages and discussing healthy habits in a playful manner. The aim is to demystify medical procedures and environments making them less intimidating for children, whilst also promoting the importance of health and wellness from a young age. The Teddy Bear Hospital has been running for close to twenty years on campus and through the AY23/24 [event](https://www.galway.ac.uk/AY23/24) we welcomed over 100 primary schools to the campus. Overall, the Teddy Bear Hospital fosters a positive engaging and educational experience for both children and university students strengthening community ties and promoting health education.

Seize the Awkward

Throughout Spring 2024, University of Galway Students' Union (SU) ran the [Seize the Awkward](https://www.galway.ac.uk/seize-the-awkward) campaign, with the aim of sparking conversations between men on campus around mental health, citing a Samaritans report that stated less than 20% of men reach out to others about their mental health and wellbeing. The campaign aimed to encourage young men to stand up and have that uncomfortable conversation with a friend about mental health. The SU released a series of videos across social media and information was displayed on screens and posterboards across the campus. The campaign was shortlisted for the Best Welfare Campaign of the Year at the annual Student Achievement Awards Ireland (SAAI).



SDG 4 Quality Education



A Snapshot of Progress



- New Lecturers in Education for Sustainable Development
- ENLIGHT University Alliance successfully secures funding of €14.4 million
- New Teanglann Interpreting Suites
- Net Zero Simulator
- School of Education Global Citizenship Education Days
- University of Galway announced a partner of the ALTITUDE Charter
- Cois Coiribe: SDG Champion Edition
- SDGs Integration Mapping Project
- Synergies in Arts, Heritage and Tourism
- Encouraging young people to engage with STEM
- University of Galway hosts family fun day for Engineers Week 2024
- Full STEAM ahead
- An Introduction to the SDGs incorporated to the New Staff Induction programme
- SDG focused podcasts series
- ENLIGHT Equity and Sustainability Transitions Summer School



201 Publications

(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)



University of Galway is an active member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education; United Nations Academic Impact and the Sustainable Development Solution Network all focused on engaging stakeholders in dialogue and action to support SDG 4.



Lecturers are embedding sustainability across the curriculum and the University has developed a new tracking tool to determine the SDG content of its courses.



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Students and Learning

New Lecturers in Education for Sustainable Development

University of Galway has appointed two new lecturers in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), based in the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) and working closely with the Sustainability Office. Working with academic and professional support colleagues, the lectureships aim to ensure that the SDGs, sustainability, the climate emergency, and related environmental issues are addressed across all of our degree programmes, undergraduate and postgraduate, and that our staff (academic and professional support) are provided with professional development in these topics as well as in aspects of appropriate (and innovative) pedagogical approaches. As part of this work a new micro-credential Sustainability in the Curriculum has been developed.

This module aims to unpack the varying definitions and principles of the concept of sustainability and provides a space for participants to embed sustainability into their own teaching and learning practice. Topics to be explored include pedagogical approaches for sustainability; teaching techniques for embedding sustainability into the curriculum; digital tools for embedding the SDGs into university modules; learning how to provide safer spaces for students to voice fears and anxieties about the climate crisis. Participants of this module will be encouraged to apply their learning in their own subject area. While the module has been developed for the Postgraduate Diploma in Academic Practise, any staff member can attend sessions and contribute to their professional development. Specifically, these include sessions on: How to teach in a burning world- that explores eco-anxiety in teaching practise; using serious games in teaching for climate action; and tools for embedding the SDGs.

ENLIGHT University Alliance successfully secures funding of €14.4 million

ENLIGHT, a European University consisting of 10 universities from 10 European countries including the University of Galway, has secured €14.4 million in funding over the next four years by the European Commission as part of the 2023 Erasmus+ call for proposals for European Universities. ENLIGHT aims to create and integrate our institutions to facilitate mobility of students and staff and the sharing of resources to build opportunities for collaboration in teaching and learning, and research and innovation among the 10 partner institutions. In the latest award of funding, ENLIGHT has introduced new elements as part of its strategic direction, including the launch of bottom-up calls for interdisciplinary thematic networks, starter grants to promote the development of future-proof education and an expansion of its focus areas, including the addition of 'culture and creativity' to ENLIGHT's current focus areas: health and well-being; digitalization; climate change; energy, circular economy. University of Galway students were winners of the very first ENLIGHT Global Citizenship Award 2023. The alliance aims to guide students to become lifelong learners and agents-of-change ready to tackle the challenges of tomorrow.

Professor Geraint Howells, Professor Alma McCarthy, Dr Ann O'Brien and Dr Johanna Clancy at the J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics SDG Poster Exhibition in September 2023.

New Teanglann Interpreting Suites

The University of Galway's new Teanglann Interpreting Suites use new technologies to achieve the SDGs by facilitating seamless bilateral international collaboration without increasing carbon footprints. Leveraging advanced telecommunication tools and interpreting technologies, these suites enable real-time interactions between students and professional interpreters of EU institutions and the UN, collaborating in real-time with Brussels, Luxembourg, Strasbourg, Vienna, and New York, among others. The suites are equipped with high-definition video conferencing systems, sophisticated interpreting software, and voice activated camera tracking, allowing participants and students to engage as if they were physically together. This technology enhances the learning experience for students by providing authentic interpreting practice and significantly reduces the need for international travel. These suites allow for on-campus collaboration thereby cutting down on carbon emissions aligning with SDG 13, Climate Action, by minimizing the environmental impact associated with travel. The Suites support SDG 4 by providing equitable access to global learning opportunities and fostering international cooperation. Through these innovative solutions, the Teanglann Interpreting Suites exemplify how technology can be harnessed to create a sustainable and interconnected educational framework, promoting environmental responsibility and high-quality education on a global scale.

Net Zero Simulator

The NetZero Simulator is an innovative web-application simulated game aimed at personal and professional development and employability of the students of Higher Education and other educational establishments, enterprises, public, communities, and other stakeholders. Its key objectives include: teach, via a scaffolded approach, about sustainable decisions and their complexity, as well as the basics of low carbon energy management and carbon accounting and budgeting; engrain the elements of systems and critical thinking; advance sustainability literacy and environmental education; act as an immersive learning tool for community outreach via workshops, corporate events and lifelong learning; formulate strategies to lead organisations to net zero targets and test their resilient infrastructure; facilitate the research with the food industry; and sustain the Masters programme module on Sustainability Leadership. The simulator development has started in May 2023 and has already involved, via different types of activities, various organizations (e.g., Department of the Taoiseach, Insight SFI Research Centre for Data Analytics, LERO, Boston Scientific etc.) and events, like the influential European Climate Change Adaptation (ECCA 2023) conference, Wild Atlantic Alliance Symposium 2023 and Macromarketing Conference 2024.

The School of Education Global Citizenship Education (GCE) Days

The School of Education Global Citizenship Education (GCE) days took place during February 2024. This is an annual event whereby external experts in the field of GCE are invited to facilitate workshops for students, schoolteachers and staff members. All workshops are two hours in duration and affiliated to the SDGs. Attendance is open to students' staff and to the secondary school teaching population. Topics and subject area varied greatly. From an interactive session focused on using games to explore development education and GCE in the classroom; to workshops including: Tight Spaces - a youth-led workshop exploring the Direct Provision system; a teachers guide to handling social justice today; teacher's guide to handling global justice today; GCE and Financial Justice; linguistically and culturally responsive practice in Irish classrooms; and GCE and the student teacher: bridging the gap from theory to practice. The event included a Plenary Session sharing 'key learning from 20 years in the field.

University of Galway announced a partner of the ALTITUDE Charter

University of Galway has been announced as a partner of the new, national ALTITUDE Project to promote inclusive educational opportunities at third level. Funded by the Higher Education Authority, ALTITUDE – the National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education, marks the start of a national conversation about how the sector can embed a universal design approach to providing education. The project is an extensive cross sectoral collaboration involving six national agencies, 15 higher education institutions and six Education and Training Board representatives. The ALTITUDE Project will support higher education and ETBs to move towards systemically embedding university design with the aim of fostering student success for all. The ALTITUDE Charter recommends key strategic enablers for institutions to support the sustainable implementation of universal design and proposes collaborative action to work towards goals under 4 key pillars: learning, teaching & assessment; supports, services & social engagement; physical environment; and the digital environment. Speaking at the announcement University of Galway President Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh said "I commend this cross sectoral effort, of which we are a leading partner, to develop the ALTITUDE Charter as a unified national approach to promoting accessible and inclusive practices in higher and further education. At University of Galway, we look forward to sharing universal design practice with colleagues across the sector."



Research

Cois Coiribe: SDG Champion Edition

In the 23-24 Winter Edition of Cois Coiribe, University of Galway's commitment to sustainability takes centre stage, reaffirmed by the University's designation as an SDG Champion. Academics, alumni, students, and staff, share their stories on the range of possibilities for climate action. This Winter Edition contains over 20 insightful research stories sharing how our university is rising to the challenge of the SDGs. Stories include for example: [The Secrets of our Future preserved in Climate Archives](#) tells the story of a University of Galway researcher that is observing marine sediment in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic seas and looking to the past to further understand the future of climate change; [Cultural Values in a Sustainable Future](#) investigates the role of culture in fostering a collective sense of responsibility and belonging and investigates how we can steward our cultural heritages to realign them with sustainable futures; and [The Real-World Effects of Cyberbullying](#) demonstrates the importance of research, education, prevention and intervention in preventing online victimisation of young people. In the article [Water is at the Centre of the Climate Crisis](#), we hear from Rory Moses McKeown, University of Galway alum and Senior Technical Consultant at WHO, who shares his views on the challenges to water safety and access in a climate crisis, and the emerging role of water in global conflicts. Imagining a Futuristic Sustainable City between Galway and Dublin presents [THE LINE](#), a futuristic planned city with one million residents made up of hyper-connected, sustainable communities, powered by 100% renewable energy resources, with all services and amenities accessible within a five-minute walk; [Creating a Better World through Better Business](#) explains how the JE Cairnes School of Business is 'walking the talk' when it comes to embedding the SDGs; and [Students for Climate Action](#) explores the work of the Talloires Network, a cooperation for social responsibility in Higher Education. The group have devised a ten-year action plan to drive civic engagement and influence policy around education and meaningful research on the gendered impacts of climate change.



Construction work is underway on University of Galway's new Learning Commons. The [landmark development](#) at the heart of the campus will offer a new, high-tech space for students, for research and for staff, with a focus on enabling learning that is more collaborative, more technology-enhanced and more creative.

SDGs Integration Mapping Project - JE Cairnes School of Business and Economics

The SDG integration mapping project uses existing and new processes to explore how faculty in the School integrate the SDGs in their teaching, engagement activities and research. Data gathered is displayed in an SDG wheel enabling users to drill down to lists of faculties working in each Goal and Target area, and by keyword. The educational and reflective nature of the project enables faculty to explore how their work aligns with the SDG Targets. The output displays the direct or indirect impact of individual's work and can feed into future planning of teaching, research and grant writing. At the programme level it contributes an overview of topics covered and helps identify unique impact. Analysis of keyword data helps to identify crosscutting themes in the work of faculty, for example, Ethics in Whistleblowing, AI and responsible use of technology, in Decent Work, in Governance, the Environment, the Marine and in healthcare. Overall the project discovers how faculty live the SDGs in their teaching, engagement activities and research. This is showcased in a website with individual profiles including videoed personal statements.

An output from the project was an SDG Poster Exhibition as part of SDG week. Academic staff in the JE Cairnes School of Business and Economics produced small accessible posters describing an element of their work that aligned with the SDGs. Created using a simple visual template to identify highlights and signal further reading, the process helped people across the School reflect on their work and the work of colleagues. Across disciplines, new programmes and modules that focus on sustainability were shared, research from across all the SDGs was shared and engagement activities with students, businesses and organisations local and international and the 3rd sector was described. The posters helped staff and others outside the school to better understand the depth and breadth of work currently being undertaken by academic staff to support the SDGs.

Synergies in Arts, Heritage and Tourism

A lecturer from the Centre of Irish Studies delivered a keynote lecture at the conference, UN Sustainable Development Goals in Teaching and Research: Synergies in Arts, Heritage and Tourism', hosted by the Dundalk Institute of Technology. on 29 April 2024. The lecture titled "Cultures of Climate Change? Place-based Policy and Practice in Higher Education", addressed issues on how the SDGs engage with research and teaching at HEIs in Ireland and internationally today.



Dr Kathy Reilly and Dr Conn Holohan have been awarded ENLIGHT Impact awards. Photo Credit: Fernando Gómez Larrea

Community Engagement

University of Galway and county libraries encouraging young people to engage with STEM

The University of Galway based STEM programme [ReelLIFE SCIENCE](#) has presented six libraries around Ireland with audiovisual equipment to help young people in schools and youth groups take part in an innovative science video competition. ReelLIFE SCIENCE challenges young science enthusiasts and filmmakers across the island of Ireland, north and south, to produce fun, 3-minute science videos to educate and entertain the public. The videos can communicate any aspect of STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), including topics like: Climate Action, How Things Work, Emerging Technology and Marvels of Medicine. With a prize fund of more than €5000, the best videos from primary schools, secondary schools and youth organisations will be screened for the public at the Galway Science and Technology Festival at University of Galway later in the year. ReelLIFE SCIENCE is supported by Science Foundation Ireland's Discover Programme, University of Galway's College of Science and Engineering, the CÚRAM SFI Research Centre for Medical Devices, and the Cell EXPLORERS science outreach programme.

University of Galway hosts family fun day for Engineers Week 2024

Organised by University of Galway's School of Engineering as part of Engineers Week 2024, which celebrates engineering across Ireland, the 2024 [Engineering Our Future: Family Fun Day](#) took place in March in the Alice Perry Engineering Building. The event included an array of science and engineering shows, film screenings, workshops, and hands-on activities to inspire both the young and the old. Throughout the day families had an opportunity to build their own wind turbine; gain a basic understanding of the role and structure of cells and DNA with Cell Explorers; build a biomaterial using slime; have fun with 3D printing; learn how to repair bicycles from An Mheitheal Rothar; explore the GEEC: Galway Energy Efficient Car; have fun in the LEGO or STEM play areas; or take some timeout in the sensory room. This was a free event, open to all, showing the world of civil, environmental, mechanical, biomedical, electronic, energy systems and computer engineering.

Full STEAM ahead

From dancing robots to dancing rappers, the next generation of scientists, engineers and filmmakers have taken part in University of Galway's inaugural ReelLIFE SCIENCE STEAM Showcase event that took place in April 2024. More than 100 young science enthusiasts, aged from 10 and 18, exhibited their Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM) projects developed in 10 Foróige youth services and youth development programmes in Galway, Mayo, Roscommon and Westmeath. The STEAM Showcase was funded by the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) Discover Programme and is a joint initiative between ReelLIFE SCIENCE and Foróige. Examples of projects exhibited on the day: young people from Eastside Youth Service in Ballybane demonstrated chemical reactions via exploding volcanoes; Ballyhaunis Targeted Youth Service Programme youth members built and coded a dancing robot using Lego Education Spike kits; Gort Youth Project presented a time-lapse of their street art mural

project; Galway City Youth Project members debuted a short film about science and nature and a drama entitled [The Things I Could Have Said](#); and the Foróige Roscommon rap group [The Roma Boys'](#) music video [Yeshua](#) was very well received by the audience

An Introduction to the SDGs incorporated to the New Staff Induction programme

A topic entitled An Introduction to the SDGs has been integrated into the University of Galway's New Staff Induction Programme. The University of Galway's Sustainability Strategy places an emphasis on the central role that staff play in the University's sustainability journey and is committed to incorporating sustainability as part of staff induction and professional development. By incorporating the SDGs into the staff induction programme, incoming staff will not only improve their own knowledge of the SDGs but will also be empowered to implement the SDGs into their own teaching curricula. In this way, the integration of the SDGs into the university's staff induction programme not only represents exciting progress towards our own Sustainability Strategy, but also the SDGs more broadly.

SDG focused podcasts series

To increase awareness of sustainability and the SDGs, University of Galway is delivering the University of Galway's Sustainability Podcast series. The series is available across a variety of platforms, allowing a wide range of listeners to tune in and hear about our efforts to embed the SDGs across the campus. In one of the [episodes](#) we hear from Adam Mullins, student at University of Galway, and founder of The Student Pantry, an initiative aimed at reducing food wastage, saving money and lowering carbon missions. We hear how waste produced from supermarkets throughout Galway City is redirected to students at no cost, combating the food waste occurring in the city, whilst also helping students save money.

ENLIGHT Equity and Sustainability Transitions Summer School

As part of the [ENLIGHT Equity and Sustainability Transitions Summer School](#) hosted by University of Galway in May 2024, we welcomed 20 students from 6 ENLIGHT partner universities in addition to having 10 University of Galway postgraduate students participating. This module is a partnership between the School of Sociology and Political Science and the School of Geography, Archaeology, and Irish Studies. Given the need to implement ambitious environmental and climate objectives and move towards carbon neutrality, a circular economy, cleaner air, cleaner transport and sustainable consumption, this postgraduate, interdisciplinary summer school explored how sustainable transitions can be advanced with equitable distribution of benefits and burdens. Students took part in lectures, workshop sessions and a one-day field trip to Inis Oírr. Feedback from students was extremely positive particularly from our own University of Galway international students who welcomed the opportunity to discuss these important issues with their ENLIGHT peers from across Europe

SDG 5 Gender Equality



Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris T.D. has officially launched University of Galway's Active* Consent programme 2023-27.
Photo Credit: Jason Clarke

A Snapshot of Progress

- Leading action on consent research and education
- Free period product initiative
- University of Galway research highlights urgent need for action against cyber violence towards women in politics
- New study looks at teacher perpetrated sexual misconduct in post-primary schools in Ireland and the UK
- Receipt of two new Athena Swan awards and Athena Swan round table discussion for Schools
- Celebrating International Women's Day
- Launch of the Aurora Alumni Network
- Thinking Beyond Series – Women in Technology: Past, Present and Future
- The annual Sheehy Skeffington Distinguished Lecture 2023



126 Publications

(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)



The University of Galway's Women's Network aims to promote gender equality by connecting members, supporting their personal and professional development, and raising awareness on issues that impact women in higher education.



University of Galway offer a range of staff training courses promoting gender equality, for example, Unconscious Bias training; Maternity Matters: Return to work; Manages Matter: Leading Modern Families; Active Bystander training; and Equal opportunities training.



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Students and Learning

Leading action on consent research and education

University of Galway has recently been awarded a special €1.3million fund in respect of efforts to develop research, education, and awareness around consent. The €1.3million fund was secured following the submission of a case study which outlines the pioneering and innovative work of the Active* Consent programme, from its inception in 2013 as a consent education and research initiative, through to it being scaled up from 2019-2022, and its place as a national programme promoting healthy relationships and fostering a culture of respect. The programme has worked with nearly all Irish higher education institutions, addressing student needs on consent, sexual violence, and harassment, and upskilling the staff who support them. Active* Consent is now acknowledged as the sectoral standard and leading national programme for consent, with a wide range of stakeholder partnerships including Union of Students Ireland, Galway RCC and Rape Crisis Network Ireland, and SOLAS/Education & Training Boards Ireland.

In 2023, The Sexual Violence and Harassment Prevention and Response Programme Coordinator, in collaboration with the Active* Consent programme initiated the recruitment of our inaugural cohort of Campus Consent Champions at the University of Galway. These individuals played a pivotal role in contributing to positive change on our campus. Equipped with specialized training in consent & digital intimacy workshop facilitation, they actively conducted numerous workshops and informative stalls, contributing significantly to our ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of consent and awareness.

Free period product initiative

University of Galway and University of Galway Students' Union have launched a pilot programme distributing free period products across campus to tackle the issue of period poverty among students and staff. The high cost of period products and the societal stigma which can still be attached to menstruation can lead to exclusion, mental health impacts and the use of unsuitable alternatives by those who menstruate. This programme aims to combat these issues and foster an inclusive, open campus with access for all. The pilot stems from an initiative that was launched by the Students' Union in 2017 to address the serious financial pressures and taboos faced by students who menstruate. At the launch of the pilot the Students Union Welfare Officer called on the Government to act on the Period Poverty in Ireland Report from February 2021.

Research

University of Galway research highlights urgent need for action against cyber violence towards women in politics

An Associate Professor from the Discipline of Journalism addressed the Oireachtas Taskforce on Safe Participation in Political Life in September, citing research findings and recommendations from University of Galway research into cyber violence against female politicians. The research highlights the rampant prevalence of cyber violence, its impact and urgent policy responses which are needed to ensure a safe and inclusive political landscape. Cyber violence against women, particularly those in the political sphere, has become alarmingly pervasive, fuelled by the mainstream integration of social media. This abuse ranges from derogatory comments to threats of violence and rape, significantly impacting mental well-being, participation, and representation of women in Irish public life. The University of Galway research is based on qualitative interviews with 78 participants, including current and former members of the Oireachtas and local councillors across political parties. The research found: Approximately 96 per cent received abusive social media or electronic messages containing hate speech, foul language, and inappropriate comments and one in five say they have considered quitting politics due to online harassment, highlighting the chilling effect of cyber violence.

New study looks at teacher perpetrated sexual misconduct in post-primary schools in Ireland and the UK

A joint study supported by University of Galway, has collected anecdotal experiences of sexual misconduct in post-primary schools in Ireland and the UK. A total of 593 respondents from Ireland (224) and the UK (369) completed the survey. All respondents took part in the survey because they had experienced some form of sexual harassment or misconduct by a teacher during their time in secondary school. Overall, sexist harassment by a teacher was the most commonly experienced form of misconduct experienced by both Irish (86%) and UK (95%) respondents, for example, being treated differently because of their gender. The second most commonly experienced form of misconduct was sexual harassment (72% and 85% in Ireland and the UK respectively). Common forms of sexual harassment included making offensive remarks about the student's physical appearance or sexual activity and making attempts to discuss sexual matters with the student. The paper, co-authored by academics from the School of Psychology highlights that that the culture change we need to support in our education settings is wide ranging. It includes supporting staff who work in post-primary schools to speak up and address staff-student harassment if they ever encounter it.

Community Engagement

Receipt of two new Athena Swan awards and Athena Swan round table discussion for Schools

The University of Galway has been awarded two Athena Swan awards in recognition of the University's commitment to advancing gender equality for staff and students. The award of an Athena SWAN Bronze Award to the School of Law and a joint award to the School of Computer Science and the university's research centre the Data Science Institute sees the University's total number of awards increase to ten Bronze and one Silver Award. Professors across both schools and research centres have welcomed the award, and express enthusiasm at continuing their progress toward achieving SDG 5: Gender Equality.

In January 2024, a round table discussion was held to celebrate the Athena Swan work currently being carried out across the University of Galway. The event focused on Athena Swan actions being carried out at School level and their impact. Representatives from the schools shared their stories regarding improvements since their last application while also highlighting some of the stumbling blocks encountered and how they hope to overcome these challenges.

Celebrating International Women's Day

President Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh opened University of Galway's week of events to mark International Women's Day 2024 and spoke of the importance of mentorship and support and the pivotal role Higher Education Institutions like University of Galway have in cultivating a culture of inclusion and respect. He also highlighted the University's plans in relation to positive action measures to increase the number of women in senior positions. Vice President for Equality Diversity and Inclusion, Dr Helen Maher, interviewed Dr Katriona O'Sullivan author of the best-selling memoir *Poor*. The Centre for Global Women Studies hosted *Life under Occupation: Women's Experiences of Living in the Palestinian Territories*; and *A Conversation about Caring* led by the College of Arts Social Science and Celtic Studies. University of Galway's IdeasLab celebrated International Women's Day with a special event in the Druid Theatre. The event, themed *Belonging* brought together a diverse lineup of speakers and panellists to highlight the unique experiences and journeys of women in Ireland, as well as to promote inclusivity and equality. Other events taking place throughout the week included discussions on *Work Life Balance*; *Women in leadership*; *Women in Engineering*; and *Careers in High End Computing*. *Fem Fest* is an intersectional and inclusive event hosting a range of organisations and university societies, including speakers experienced in gender-based violence, period poverty, gender and migration, reproductive rights, feminist lawyering, and ecofeminism.

Launch of the Aurora Alumni Network

The Aurora women's leadership programme celebrated its ten-year anniversary this year. To mark this momentous occasion, and the fact that over 100 women from University of Galway have now completed the Aurora programme, we launched the University of Galway's Aurora Alumni Network. This network enables University of Galway Aurorans to reconnect with their previous Aurora cohorts and expand their networks to other female leaders who have completed their programme. The network launch comprised of a roundtable discussion with past Aurorans focusing on their experiences of the programme and how it has impacted them, followed by an opportunity to network and connect with Aurora Alumni.

Thinking Beyond Series – Women in Technology: Past, Present and Future

A lunchtime panel discussion focusing on women and the evolving Information Technology (IT) sector in Ireland. This panel discussion gave the past, present and future perspective of women in tech in Ireland. Leading academics shared key findings from interviews conducted with women in the IT Sector in Ireland, from the 1990's to present. Combined with current perspectives on Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) initiatives and strategies across Universities and Industry. Attendees gained insights from the changing status of women in Ireland's IT Sector from the 1970's to 2010's, the changing evolution of the sector, the extent to which factors influencing women in tech have changed over the years. Current initiatives on EDI across both academia and industry and gender equality gaps in Irish IT.

The annual Sheehy Skeffington Distinguished Lecture 2023

The theme of this annual lecture series is having the courage to speak up against injustice and inequality. Dr. Kim Young-McLear delivered the lecture entitled *Unearthing our gifts to flourish*. Dr Kim is an organizational strategist, cybersecurity professional, and professor with more than 25 years' experience within the US federal government, higher education, and community organisations. Dr Tom Clonan (Senator) former captain in the Irish Army also joined Dr Kim, speaking about his experience of whistleblowing on Sexual Violence in the Armed Forces.



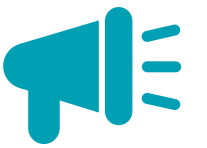
SDG 6

Clean Water and Sanitation



Photo Credit : Aengus Mc Mahon

A Snapshot of Progress



- Water is at the Centre of the Climate Crisis
- Cutting-edge water quality research
- New Drinking Water Fountains
- Water Share Ireland

Students and Learning

Water is at the Centre of the Climate Crisis

An article in Cois Coiribe, Water is at the Centre of the Climate Crisis, explored the critical role of water in the context of climate change. The author, a University of Galway alumnus and Senior Technical Consultant at the World Health Organisation (WHO) discusses the multifaceted challenges related to water safety and access, highlighting how climate change exacerbates these issues. He notes that changing climate patterns, economic development, population growth, urbanization and migration are increasing pressure on water resources leading to conflicts and even the weaponization of water in some regions. The author's education at University of Galway was instrumental in shaping his career providing him with a strong foundation in the science of water safety and microbiology. He acknowledges the University's role in helping him understand the importance of safe drinking water and sanitation. Furthermore, he underscores the necessity for significant diplomatic efforts to manage water related conflicts and advocates for Ireland's continued engagement in global peace efforts leveraging its position as a neutral country with a strong standing in the UN.



Our Water Stewardship Charter commits to reducing water usage on campus by 10% by 2025



271 Publications

(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)



Our campus wide indoor and outdoor drinking water stations offer a free and convenient alternative to the purchase of single-use plastic water bottles.



University of Galway's campus water network is approx. 3 km long; it is mapped-out and zoned and actions agreed to eliminate all unnecessary water usage.



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Research

Cutting-edge water quality research

The University of Galway EcoHydroInformatics Research Group (EHIRG) specialises in hydrological and water quality process in surface waters with a particular interest in coastal and transitional waterbodies. Recent advancements of the EHIRG research in water quality improvement significantly contribute to achieving SDG 6. The Irish Water Quality Index (IEWQI) Model and the Assessment of Trophic Status Index (ATSI) Model exemplify these efforts. The IEWQI Model provides a comprehensive framework for rating water quality, incorporating multiple parameters to ensure accurate and reliable assessments of water bodies. This model aids in identifying pollution sources and guiding remediation efforts, aligning with SDG 6 by promoting good ambient water quality. Similarly, the ATSI Model assesses the trophic status of aquatic ecosystems, evaluating nutrient levels and potential eutrophication risks. This model supports sustainable water management practices by preventing nutrient overloads, which can degrade water quality and disrupt aquatic life.

Community Engagement

New Drinking Water Fountains

The installation of new water fountains across campus demonstrates University of Galway's on-going commitment to progressing SDGs 6. The installation of new water fountains has increased the total number of water fountains to over 30 internal water fountains and 4 external hands-free stations across campus. In line with SDGs 6 and 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) and the university's Sustainability Strategy, the University of Galway aims to reduce total water consumption by 10% across campus and eliminate the use of single use plastic items such as water bottles. The installation of new drinking water fountains represents an important step towards achievement of these goals.

Water Share Ireland

An academic in Civil Engineering has been involved with GOAL for several years in developing sustainable practices in water engineering with this in various African countries. He is currently involved in developing research into solar powered water distribution systems. The purpose is to firstly develop an interactive design tool to design water distribution systems, then to size solar panels required to drive pumps and then size the pumps necessary to pressurise the system. The team will then provide training to engineers in Africa. This research will enable the design and construction of cheap water supplies to remote towns and villages in countries such as Sierra Leone, Kenya, Malawi and others. The project is part of a larger GOAL initiative entitled 'Water Share Ireland'.





SDG 7

Affordable and Clean Energy



Record-breaking testing reveals potential for next generation marine turbine
Photo Credit: Martina Regan

A Snapshot of Progress



- Micro-credentials focused on Clean and Affordable Energy
- The Campus as a Living Lab - Renewable Energy Installations
- Record-breaking testing reveals potential for next generation marine turbine
- Energy Citizenship in the Making: Pathways to support citizen engagement in the European energy transition'
- Mega4Wind project
- Kites generating electricity
- The Sustainable and Resilient Structures Research Group
- Protection of Offshore Turbine Blades
- The impacts of Fit for 55 on Ireland's maritime sector
- SHARED GREEN DEAL
- Roles for citizens in the Irish energy transition
- University of Galway and Health Services Executive collaboration



347 Publications
(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)



University of Galway is the 2023 SEAI Energy in Buildings winner for the Áras De Brún building retrofit project.



Since 2006, the University has decreased its energy usage across campus by 50%. We have rolled out Solar PV panel across campus buildings and completed a demonstrator geothermal heat pump project to heat the swimming pool in the Sports Centre.



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Students and Learning

Micro-credentials focused on Clean and Affordable Energy

University of Galway is offering a suite of new micro-credentials focused on equipping students and professionals with the specialised knowledge and skills needed to implement and promote sustainable energy solutions. For example, our micro-credential on [Energy management for organisations](#) prepares the graduate for managing energy in industry according to the energy management standard ISO 50001, our course on [Green Hydrogen Technology design and analysis](#) focuses on the potential roles green hydrogen can play in decarbonisation in the electricity, transportation and industrial sectors and our [Passive House Design](#) course has been designed in partnership with Passive House Institute (PHI) and investigates the building envelope and technology requirement associated with passive house construction projects. By offering micro-credentials on clean energy, universities play a pivotal role in advancing SDGT by educating and empowering individuals to drive the transition to sustainable and affordable energy solutions.

The Campus as a Living Lab - Renewable Energy Installations

University of Galway is the [2023 SEAI Energy in Buildings winner](#) for the Áras De Brún building retrofit project. The Áras de Brún Building, constructed in 1960, was a successful retrofit utilising numerous sustainable technologies achieving energy reductions and serving as a live research platform. This "Living Lab" research platform promotes further exploration of decarbonisation strategies and offers the academic community valuable insights and data. This project was funded by the Higher Education Authority under the Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Pathfinder Programme.

University of Galway is a pilot site for the [GEOFIT project](#), a European initiative aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of geothermal energy systems for building retrofitting. The GEOFIT project uses a closed loop system to collect heat from 18 boreholes (each 150m deep) drilled into the bedrock. The heat extracted is boosted by the heat pumps and feeds a district pipe network connecting the University swimming pool.



Michael Curran, Head of Building Services, Energy and Utilities at University of Galway, collects the Energy in Buildings Award at the SEAI Awards 2023 for the retrofit of Áras de Brún.



Research

Record-breaking testing reveals potential for next generation marine turbine

In February 2023, a fully recyclable composite structure was tested in the Large Structures Testing Laboratory in the Alice Perry Engineering Building. This 5-meter-long recyclable structure was made using glass fibre and thermoplastic resin. It is a demonstrator which represents the main structure component of a wind turbine blade. The test results showed that it is very promising to use recyclable composite materials instead of conventional non-recyclable materials in wind turbine blade manufacturing. This research is led by researchers at the Sustainable & Resilient Structures Research Group in the School of Engineering. A Galway local manufacturer, ÉireComposites Teo, also contributes to this research as the industrial partner. This work is part of the ReBlade project, re-blading of Irish wind turbines using novel technologies, funded by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) under the National Energy Research Development and Demonstration Funding Programme. This project aims to develop advanced technologies to retrofit ageing turbines through re-blading with new highly efficient and resilient blades. With the use of recyclable composite materials, it is possible to reduce more than 130,000 tonnes/year of waste generated from the wind energy sector since 2030, aligning well with SDG 7 and SDG 12.

Energy Citizenship in the Making: Pathways to support citizen engagement in the European energy transition'

University of Galway researchers co-organised and participated in the launch of a joint policy brief in Brussels. The policy brief, Energy Citizenship in the Making: Pathways to support citizen engagement in the European energy transition, was produced by four Horizon 2020 projects working on the theme of energy citizenship: DIALOGUES, ENCLUDE, EC2, and EnergyPROSPECTS. Researchers were present as part of EnergyPROSPECTS, a pan-European project that was led by the University. A central remit of the project was the need to understand and develop energy behavioural change among individuals and communities with a view to ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for European citizens. EnergyPROSPECTS contextualised this change by framing individuals and communities as energy citizens. The theme of the policy launch was that citizenship engagement is not merely an individual responsibility, but it also requires the support of the system it is intended to help improve. The launch also served as a community outreach on energy, as researchers from across Europe reflected on how individuals and communities are leading the way in terms of restoring people's sense of agency in the energy transition.

Mega4Wind project

Ireland faces great challenges in accessing the large wind power resource in the deeper Atlantic Ocean off our coast. These include extreme conditions, especially in winter, where waves greater than 15m in height occur each year and waves up to 30m height have occurred in the past, a considerable number of storms that pass through each year and increasing ocean depths. The ongoing Mega4Wind project is a collaboration between the University of Galway and ÉireComposites Teo, funded by the SEAI, that looks to help access this incredible native wind resource. The project will contribute significantly to realising an Irish electrical grid with electricity provided from clean renewable sources as the proposed technology will provide a more efficient and sustainable solution for exploiting our offshore wind resource. The Mega4Wind project proposes a disruptive and innovative solution for the wind industry, a novel floating Vertical Axis Wind Turbine (VAWT), which not only maximises the use of materials but also has performance benefits. The project will investigate the best wind turbine configurations on the single floating platform from both a performance and Levelized Cost of Energy perspective. This research work aligns particularly well with SDG7 and SDG13.

Kites generating electricity

Airborne Wind Energy (AWE) uses kites or drones that are tethered to the ground to generate electricity. There is a diverse set of challenges facing the adoption of AWE technology, including product safety/regulation, technology feasibility, and developing effective supply chains. Hibernian Airborne Wind energy Kites (HAWK) will accelerate development and deployment in the Irish marketplace of competitive energy-related products, processes and systems by introducing an open-source database effectively giving original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) a head-start in composite airframe development. This activity will strengthen Ireland's reputation in the Airborne Wind Energy space and will encourage increased international collaboration. The main aim of the HAWK project is to determine the key challenges and barriers for Airborne Wind Energy (AWE) system developers in predicting the capital and operating costs of composite airframe structures by developing techno-economic analysis models supported by data for candidate materials. Based on the material test data, a detailed analysis of the main wing component for long-term performance will be conducted.



The Sustainable and Resilient Structures Research Group

At the start of 2024, a milestone was hit by researchers in the Sustainable and Resilient Structures Research Group in the School of Engineering, where they applied 1.3m fatigue cycles as part of a full-scale structural test on the river turbine foil, which is the highest number ever reported on a full-scale marine energy component in dry laboratory conditions. The successful testing was completed as part of the €3m H2020 CRIMSON marine project, which aims to develop and deliver to market a sustainable marine turbine that can produce clean energy at a reduced cost. The project is led by Galway-based ÉireComposites, with technology designed by the Ocean Renewable Power Company (ORPC).

The results from the full-scale structural testing will, not only de-risk the technology, but also inform the next generation of testing standards. Following the testing at the University of Galway, the turbine was testing in a large tow tank in Rome and it will be deployed for operational trials in Strangford Lough later this year. The successful integration of marine energy technologies is expected to play a key role in the renewable energy mix as we strive to become carbon neutral by 2050.

Protection of Offshore Turbine Blades

A key element of achieving SDG 7 is increasing the energy generated from wind. To meet this growing demand, the wind sector has moved towards manufacturing larger and more efficient blades, with higher blade tip speeds. A frequent source of damage to these blades is leading edge erosion caused by rain droplet impingement. This erosion leads to a loss in the aerodynamic efficiency of the blades, subsequently reducing the annual energy production of wind turbines. SPOTBlade and LEProtect are two projects, which are both funded by SEAI, within the Sustainable & Resilient Structures Research Group at the University of Galway that address this issue. The SPOTBlade project focuses on studying the mechanisms responsible for damage initiation and erosion propagation. It is a collaboration between 4 universities - University of Galway, SETU Carlow, University of Limerick and TU Dublin. LEProtect aims to develop and demonstrate a novel high-performance thermoplastic polyurethane-based Leading-Edge Protection system for wind turbine blades, which is a collaboration between the University of Galway and ÉireComposites. In conclusion, these projects are developing solutions to prevent this critical issue in wind energy generation, supporting SDG7.

The impacts of Fit for 55 on Ireland's maritime sector

In 2021 the European Commission put forward the 'Fit for 55' legislation, which aimed to promote the use of renewable and low carbon fuels across the EU maritime transport sector, as part of the European Green Deal. Research undertaken in 2022 and 2023 by academic staff in the JE Cairnes School of Business and Economics provided critical quantitative evidence about the economic effects of the 'Fit for 55' package. They found that the cost of marine fuel would increase by 28% by 2050, potentially impacting the maritime

transport sector and, by extension, the broader Irish economy. However, these effects would not materialise significantly until 2035, so the sector would have time to react to the new policy environment, and the overall impact on Ireland's economic activity would be minimal.

The research offered policymakers the necessary evidence to engage in informed decision-making regarding the adoption of EU proposals. It provided the Irish Government with the appropriate information to decide on the 'Fit for 55' legislation, which came into force in October 2023. On the back of the research, the Irish Government was better prepared for the EU legislation entering into force and able to provide advice to shipping companies and ports in their efforts to decarbonise.

University of Galway campus and buildings are testbeds for positive sustainable actions. Since 2006, the University has exceeded targets by decreasing its energy usage across campus by **50%**. We have rolled out Solar PV panel across campus buildings and completed a demonstrator geothermal heat pump project to heat the swimming pool in the Sports Centre.

Community Engagement

SHARED GREEN DEAL

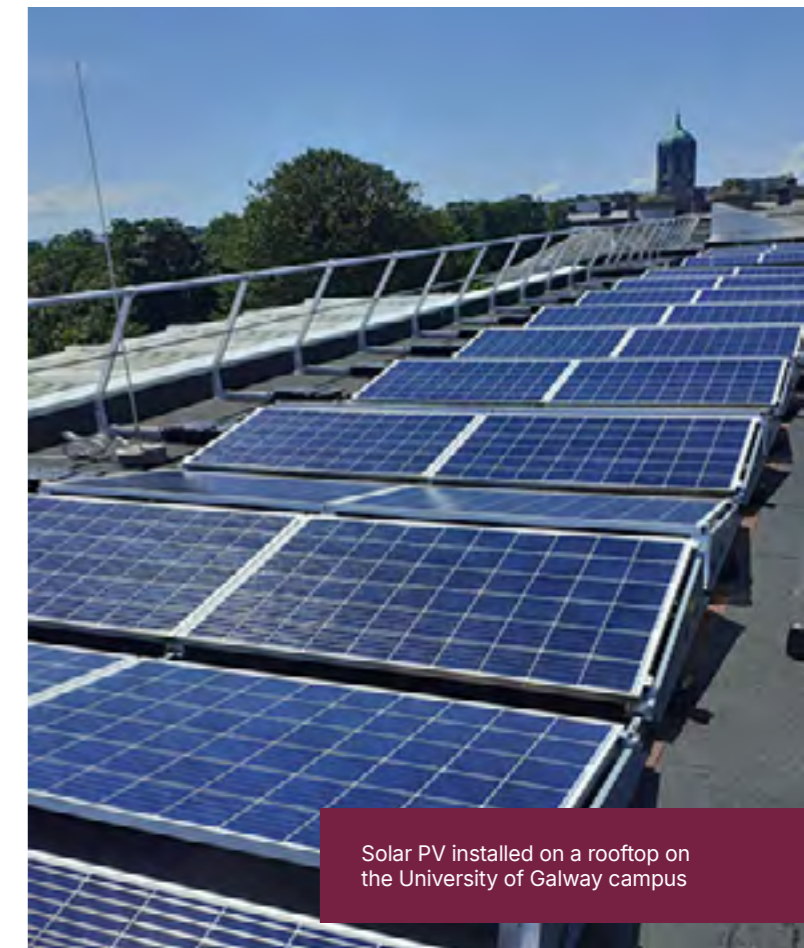
The transition to clean energy systems is not just technological; it is social, and thus requires meaningful engagement of diverse publics to be successful and fair. As part of the Horizon 2020 project SHARED GREEN DEAL, a team from the University of Galway's Geography department leads participatory research on community visioning for local clean energy futures in Europe. Between May 2023 and May 2024, we worked with four partners based at local authorities and non-governmental organisations from across Europe to co-creatively plan a series of workshops that engaged policymakers, business, and the public in imagining the future with renewable, efficient and sufficient energy systems. The workshops were held in diverse urban and rural communities in Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom facing climate-crisis-related challenges such as coal phase-out, rising temperatures affecting agriculture, impending rising sea levels, and energy poverty. Community visioning was a creative, fun, and engaging way to build networks and engage communities whose voices are not often heard. As co-creative research, the project is furthermore integrated in the partners' long-term plans, serving as both the continuation of previous work and the basis for new forms of engagement to ensure a fairer and more successful energy transition.

Roles for citizens in the Irish energy transition

At a roundtable discussion held in Dublin in September 2023, University of Galway geographers discussed energy behavioural change as part of a community outreach on energy. The event, What roles for citizens in the Irish energy transition? was attended by industry insiders, policymakers and other interested parties. One participant, Ruth Buggie of the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland attested that she found 'this event very useful especially in terms of putting the challenges we know exist for Irish communities into context with the EU wide experience and to understand that no one has all the answers but through shared projects such as this we can help find better solutions that work for everyone'. The event also offered Galway researchers an energy focused community platform at which to present research undertaken as part of EnergyPROSPECTS, a pan-European project that was led by Galway. A particular point of focus in this presentation was an analysis of five detailed case studies of energy citizenship in Ireland ('Saoránacht Fuinnimh: Cúig chás-staidéar'). Ultimately, the event provided a fruitful exchange of energy focused ideas with a view of ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for Irish citizens

University of Galway and Health Services Executive collaboration

Our Head of Building Services Energy and Utilities hosted members of the Health Services Executive (HSE) Climate Action team from across Ireland, on campus, for an information sharing and showcase event. The event was an opportunity to highlight the extent of energy projects completed by the University of Galway and the tools we use daily in achieving the Government's climate action targets. There was an opportunity to share some of the exciting projects planned for the future, including a new Solar PV Farm and a district heating scheme to serve our north campus. The schedule for the day featured a site tour to visit our completed energy projects, for example: the awarding winning SEAI Energy in Buildings 2023 Áras De Brún pathfinder project; No. 9 Distillery Road retrofit project; Geothermal project linked to the Kingfisher swimming pool; Áras na Mac Léinn fabric and Solar PV project. The site visit aims to foster future collaborations between the University of Galway and HSE Climate Action teams locally and regionally; these visits are beneficial for knowledge sharing and leadership in achieving the 2030 targets.



Solar PV installed on a rooftop on the University of Galway campus

SDG 8

Decent Work and Economic Growth

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



A Snapshot of Progress



- Awarding of Student Sustainability Leadership Internships for 2023
- Module on Responsible Management & Leadership
- MESS4GE
- Influence of digitalisation on work inequalities in later life
- Costs of Discrimination and Benefits of Diversity for Business in Ireland
- Cois Coiribe: From University of Galway to Corporate Leadership
- Regional Business Summit
- Promoting decent work in the tourism and hospitality sector
- The Impact of Low-code Technology for Sustainable Community Transformation

The Greater Galway Charter for Sustainable Urbanism

University of Galway and Atlantic Technological University (Galway) have come together with the Mayor of the City of Galway and the Galway Chamber to announce and sign the Greater Galway Charter for Sustainable Urbanism - a manifesto for long-term strategic thinking and planning for the region.



137 Publications

(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)

95.5%

95.5% of our graduates are employed or in further study within 9 months of graduating (2022 Graduate Outcome survey).



University of Galway was the winner of the Building Effective Partnerships category of the AHECS Employability Awards 2024.



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Students and Learning

Awarding of Student Sustainability Leadership Internships for 2023

The University of Galway's Student Sustainability Leadership Awards scheme provides paid internships to University of Galway students seeking to develop their sustainability knowledge and skills. These internships aim to provide enthusiastic, sustainability-minded students with an opportunity to work with our sustainability team's on-campus. Over an 8-week period, students collaborate with staff to arrange an SDG-showcase event, compile sustainability-related learning tools and resources, refresh the university's sustainability website and document the University of Galway's ongoing progress in progressing the SDGs.

Module on Responsible Management & Leadership

Managing and leading responsibly is an integrative approach regarding the role of business in collaborating to achieve ethics, responsibility and sustainability (ERS) goals, while creating long-term sustainable business models. This Master in Sustainability Leadership and Executive Master of Business Administration module applies responsible management and leadership in practice, facilitating students to engage in changing organisational practices to make them more responsible, with a focus on transformative change. Using a balance of theory and practice, including application of central tools such as stakeholder management in addressing the SDGs students collaborate with regional organisations to analyse key sustainability challenges encountered by business leaders, and generate real-life solutions towards resolving these. This module recently received a UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) Innovative Pedagogy award.

Research

MESS4GE

The University of Galway is leading an EU funded project called **MESS4GE** that aims to equip business consultants and SMEs with the tools needed to prepare and deliver insightful reports on their environmental, social and governance (ESG) performance. The partners have created a toolkit that is right sized and focuses on the needs of users. This toolkit is designed to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) evaluate their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance. It also assists them in producing comprehensive reports that meet the requirements of the new Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). By establishing a structured system for evaluating and communicating ESG performance in SMEs across Europe, individuals will have the ability to make investments and foster collaborations that are informed by data-driven ESG activities.

Influence of digitalisation on work inequalities in later life

An academic staff from the discipline of Management, JE Cairnes School of Business and Economics (SBE) is a Management Committee member for Ireland and policy advisor for **COST Action CA21107**, a research network that aims to overcome critical knowledge gaps on the influence of digitalisation on work inequalities in later life, addressing the research-policy disconnect and engaging with stakeholders to inform future policy and practice. The network aims to enhance scientific knowledge by integrating different disciplines and developing collaborations with stakeholders. A policy event was held at the National University of Ireland headquarters recently on the impacts of digitalisation in Ireland for older workers and employers with presentations from JE Cairnes School of Business and Economics. An international dimension was provided with speakers from Mendel University, University of Leicester and Czech Academy of Sciences. Policy roundtable contributors were: Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment, IBEC, CIPD, NESF, Age Action, UCD, and SIPTU.

From University of Galway to Corporate Leadership- Oliver Walls Impact at Bank of Ireland

In the Cois Coiribe article *In conversation: Oliver Wall, Chief of Staff at Bank of Ireland*, Wall highlights his journey from University of Galway to becoming the Chief of Staff and Head of Corporate Affairs at Bank of Ireland. Wall attributes his leadership skills to his time with the University's Literary & Debating Society. In his role, Wall focuses on various impactful initiatives such as employee wellbeing and sustainability efforts particularly in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. For example: a wellbeing strategy called Power Down and Recharge encourages staff to switch off and recharge during and after the workday, ensuring that employees sustainably distribute their workload; and Bank of Ireland has become the first Irish bank to have its GHG emissions targets validated by the Science-Based Targets initiative.

Community Engagement

Regional Business Summit

The annual Regional Business Summit for the West of Ireland was hosted by University of Galway for the second year in a row, with a focus on addressing business challenges in the region. The event was organised by J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics, in collaboration with Galway Chamber, itag - the technology community in the western region, and Data 2 Sustain. The Summit provided research-informed insights and practical advice on how businesses can be more innovative and how to respond to current and future challenges. This year's summit focused on digitalisation at speed and responsible technology; scaling a business with lessons from indigenous companies and multinationals; and sustainable finance. The sustainable finance panel addressed the challenges of integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations into financial systems and directing investments towards more sustainable economic activities. The panel brought together multiple perspectives - banking, business, and academia - to address the critical drivers, implications, and importance of accessing finance based on sustainable practices.

Promoting decent work in the tourism and hospitality sector

SDG 8 is about promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all. Decent work means opportunities for everyone to get work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration. An academic from JE Cairnes School of Business and Economics is carrying out research focused on promoting decent work in the Tourism and Hospitality sector and in May 2024 hosted a hospitality symposium targeted at practitioners in the sector and designed as a research-informing-practice event. The symposium featured a keynote by a leading academic from AUT New Zealand, and a panel of experienced professionals from the hospitality industry. The primary objective was to draw from the panel, and the informed audience, a series of recommendations for change, informed by the goal of decent work. The symposium was open to all hospitality

stakeholders and educators, and the event triggered a lively discussion on the possibilities for change, based on a wide array of experience and perspectives. The one unifying feature of those attending was a deep care for the industry and a desire to make change for the good of all stakeholders. As a collective (speakers + audience), the importance of the industry to the Irish economy was acknowledged. Also, that those working in the industry love the work that they do, whilst working conditions need to improve to encourage retention. Determined that this would not just be a 'talking shop', the attendees pooled their expertise to develop One Dozen Actions for Change. A report containing these proposed actions has been shared with government ministers. This is an example of bottom-up activism, by academic and practitioner partners, promoting decent work in a key sector of our economy and attempting to influence/inform policy and practice.

The Impact of Low-code Technology for Sustainable Community Transformation

The need to address sustainable development challenges has been a global concern for researchers and practitioners. According to the United Nations, one of these challenges is addressing the digital divide, especially in disadvantaged rural communities in the digital sphere. As businesses and societies are turning to digital transformation initiatives, scant empirical evidence exists to show how digital technologies transform communities. As a team of researchers in the **Citizen Development Lab**, Business Information Systems discipline at the University of Galway; we engaged in industry-led research with Yellow Africa (a fintech organisation) and Zoho (a low-code technology provider) to understand the community effect of the organisational adoption of digital technology. In doing so, we conducted interviews with executives and staff of Yellow Africa and over 40 Malawian rural community members, coupled with utilising archival reports. Our research revealed how Yellow Africa leveraged Zoho Creator - a low-code technology and incentivised Malawian rural communities to access, own, utilise and realise the benefits of digital solutions for their community empowerment.

The University of Galway Student Sustainability Internship Programme launched on February 20th, 2024. Photo Credit: Angus McMahan



Minister Naughton launches University of Galway's new Masters in Sustainability Leadership at the Regional Business Summit



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Mol Smaointe
IdeasLab



Welcome



SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure



A Snapshot of Progress

- Opening of IdeasLab
- Students and businesses run inaugural hackathon
- Séamus McDermott Entrepreneurial Scholarship for 2024
- Methodology for assessing whole-life carbon of buildings
- Space research sheds new light on formation of planets
- An Exciting Collaboration on Space Research
- Disrupting Buildings – open access book
- Innovation Office
- Signature innovation partnership with Medtronic
- Land Development Agency becomes a patron of Construct Innovate
- Thriftmas Market



280 Publications

(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)



University of Galway received the Times Higher Education Award for Technological or Digital Innovation of the Year for its artificial intelligence-powered virtual assistant for students named Cara.



In the last 3 years University of Galway has spun out 14 new companies, gained 27 patents, licensed 42 technologies, and launched 110 projects with industry.



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Students and Learning

Opening of IdeasLab

The University of Galway formally opened the IdeasLab space on campus, marking the institution's commitment to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship among its student body. IdeasLab is University of Galway's student innovation hub. It is an open collaborative space designed to enable students to explore ideas and personalise their entrepreneurial and innovative skillset to succeed in the complex world beyond university. The formal opening of the IdeasLab space symbolises the University's dedication to creating an environment that nurtures creativity, collaboration, and transformative ideas. This space is a vibrant hub where students can bring their innovative concepts to life, collaborate with like-minded peers, and receive mentorship from industry experts. In April 2024 IdeasLab hosted the first-ever President's Award for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Over 100 students received their awards for successful completion of IdeasLab programmes, from University President Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh.

Students and businesses run inaugural hackathon

University of Galway students and the local business community joined forces for the IdeasLab Hackathon powered by Liberty IT, with the aim of creating solutions to support and promote the city's sustainable infrastructure growth. The hackathon event invited students from diverse disciplines to form teams and tackle real world challenges through creative technological solutions. The real-time event gave the students the opportunity to collaborate, experiment, learn and problem solve under the guidance of employees from Liberty IT. Participants heard from representatives from the local business community on the importance for Galway's infrastructure to continue to develop sustainably to meet the demands of industry and our people. The students then worked in five multi-disciplinary teams to design and develop solutions to support and promote sustainable infrastructure growth. Liberty IT employees supported the students to give them a sense of solving a 'real world' company problem to help develop their learning and to better understand their approach to planning, problem solving and technology. Participants were given a Participant Resource Pack in advance of the event and were judged on a range of criteria including problem understanding, innovation, technology choices and presentation. Students Ethan O'Brien, Ankit Akash, Amandeep Manchanda and Shambhavy Avasthi were announced winners for their solution of a smart meter designed to monitor and analyse the energy consumption patterns within households to provide insightful data on a home's overall energy efficiency.

Séamus McDermott Entrepreneurial Scholarship for 2024

University of Galway and the Liffey Trust have announced first year Business Information Systems student Elizabeth Busari as the recipient of the. Established in 2022 and funded through the philanthropic support of the Liffey Trust, the Séamus McDermott Entrepreneurial Scholarship supports students who are committed to developing their innovative and entrepreneurial potential through their university journey. The scholarship is supported by IdeasLab the University of Galway Entrepreneurial Education and Training unit. The technology that Elizabeth's is working on is called 'UNdump': an innovative app designed to revolutionize the way we deal with unwanted items by teaching users a multitude of ways to upcycle. With a clear goal to make the world cleaner with every 'UNdump', Elizabeth envisions a future where, instead of disposing of items, people will turn to UNdump for sustainable alternatives. Her project resonates deeply with the Universities value of sustainability, and it recently being recognised as a national SDG Champion.

University of Galway is a partner of Global Challenges University Alliance (GCUA) 2030. The objective of GCUA 2030 is to equip the next generation of researchers, teachers and academic leaders with knowledge, tools and networks that will strengthen their capacity to contribute to the SDGs through innovation and international collaboration.

Research

Methodology for assessing whole-life carbon of buildings

University of Galway and Irish Green Building Council have been collaborating through Construct Innovate on an SEAI funded project UPFRONT-CO2e to develop a methodology for assessing whole-life carbon of buildings. Carbon emissions are released not only during operational life of our buildings, but also during the manufacturing, transportation, construction, and end of life phases of all built assets, buildings and infrastructure. These emissions, commonly referred to as embodied carbon, have largely been overlooked historically, but contribute around 11% of all global carbon emissions. In Ireland's Climate Action Plan, there is a focus on reducing both embodied and operational carbon of our buildings. The recast of the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) includes mandatory whole life carbon assessment at building design stage. Within the Climate Action Plan 2023, SEAI have been tasked with developing an embodied carbon building rating calculation methodology taking account of EPBD by 2025. It is envisaged that the methodology developed and tested in the UPFRONT-CO2e project will be adopted by SEAI. The Construct Innovate webinar series on Sustainability Planning in Construction ran over 7 weeks from September and featured over 20 experts in the area. Typically, over 100 people attended the live webinars each week with 100s more watching the recording online afterwards

Space research sheds new light on formation of planets

An international team of astronomers has shed new light on the fascinating and complex process of planet formation. Using the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope (ESO's VLT) in Chile, researchers captured stunning images of more than 80 young stars and discs of dust and gas where planets are forming. The data has been published today in three papers in Astronomy & Astrophysics. The research represents one of the largest surveys ever of planet-forming discs, providing astronomers with a wealth of data and a treasure trove of imagery and unique insights to help unpick the mysteries of planet formation in different regions of our galaxy. The team studied 86 stars across three different star-forming regions of the Milky Way galaxy: Taurus and Chamaeleon I, both around 600 light-years from Earth, and Orion, a gas-rich cloud about 1,300 light-years from us that is known to be the birthplace of several stars more massive than our Sun. The collection of new images showcases the extraordinary diversity of planet-forming discs in just three, relatively small, regions of our galaxy.

An Exciting Collaboration on Space Research

The Freeform-OPTIX consortium is an exciting collaboration on space research, led by a Galway based specialist optical metrology company. The founders, John, David and Ruth Mackey are proud alumni and will work with academic staff from Physics and Engineering. Industry partners include ÉireComposites Teo and MBryonics. A unique part of the work will be the investigation into the sustainability aspects of the new products and materials, which will be led by a circular economy expert based in the College of Business, Public Policy and Law.

Disrupting Buildings – open access book

Disrupting Buildings defines a deep renovation digital ecosystem for the 21st century. The world's extant building stock accounts for a significant portion of worldwide energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. In 2020, buildings and construction accounted for 36% of global final energy consumption and 37% of energy-related CO2 emissions. The European Union (EU) estimates that up to 75% of the EU's existing building stock has poor energy performance, 85–95% of which will still be in use in 2050. To meet the goals of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change will require a transformation of construction processes and deep renovation of the extant building stock. The World Economic Forum, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and the European Commission are amongst the many global organisations that recognise the important role ICTs can play in construction, renovation, and maintenance, as well as supporting the incentivisation and financing of deep renovation. Technologies such as sensors, big data analytics and machine learning, building information modelling (BIM), digital twinning, simulation, robots, cobots and unmanned autonomous vehicles (UAVs), additive manufacturing, smart contracts, and the Internet of Things are transforming the deep renovation process, improving sustainability performance, and developing new services and markets.



Community Engagement

Innovation Office

University of Galway's Innovation Office catalyses and accelerates the impact of our research and innovation. We do this by engaging with external stakeholders, working closely with our research community and supporting new ventures. Our Business Innovation Centre is at the heart of our innovation ecosystem. The Business Innovation Centre provide a dynamic environment for startups, small businesses and academic entrepreneurs. The hub offers state of the art facilities including bio incubator laboratories, wet laboratories, co working spaces and services office facilities. It encourages collaboration among students, researchers and industry professionals with access to University of Galway's research ecosystem and innovation programmes and institutes. It offers services such as tailored training, business development and grant acquisition guidance, The Centre also facilitate commercialisation pathways and connections with venture capitalists and funding bodies. In the last 3 years University of Galway has spun out 14 new companies, gained 27 patents, licensed 42 technologies, and launched 110 projects with industry. In 2023, three companies officially spun out from the university joining over 30 companies on our spin-out list.

Companies

NUA SURGICAL is dedicated to innovating in women's health and developing a device to improve access and visualisation during Caesarean delivery.

Lifelet Medical is developing a novel biomimetic leaflet material for heart valve replacements, transcending the durability and manufacturing limitations associated with current technology offerings.

Amara Therapeutics is a digital therapeutics company determined to change the way pelvic healthcare is delivered globally.

Signature innovation partnership with Medtronic

University of Galway have agreed a five-year €5 million signature innovation partnership with Medtronic plc, a global leader in healthcare technology. The partnership is focused on three pillars: developing the MedTech ecosystem, STEM and research. This is the first signature partnership between University of Galway and industry. It is envisaged that Medtronic's investment will enable significant expansion of the University's MedTech ecosystem and progress its current range of STEM programmes and offer access to early-stage seed funding for new collaborative research projects. The partnership will also support the establishment of two new research institutes at University of Galway. The first being the new Institute for Clinical Trials, which was launched in May 2023. The second, still in development, will focus on medical technologies and advanced therapeutics. The institutes, and the support afforded through the University of Galway-Medtronic partnership, will facilitate sustained, research-led development, further positioning Galway as the centre of Ireland's global MedTech hub, a significant contributor to economic growth and regional development and the University as integral to research for the public good on the world stage.

Land Development Agency becomes a patron of Construct Innovate

Construct Innovate, the national research centre for construction technology and innovation hosted by University of Galway, has announced the Land Development Agency (LDA) as its first Patron Member. Construct Innovate has more than 60 industry associate member organisations as it aims to provide industry-led, independent, evidence-based research through collaboration, focusing on devising solutions for key industry challenges and meeting the demands of Ireland's major building and investment programmes. The LDA Patron Membership builds on the collaboration already underway with Construct Innovate on several projects and initiatives to support the work of the LDA and the wider Irish built environment sector. John Coleman, Chief Executive of the Land Development Agency commented: "The LDA is proud of its sustainability record and this partnership with Construct Innovate will place us at the centre of innovative design and technological research. This important collaboration will enable us to develop new building methodologies and help shape the environmental credentials of the next generation of LDA homes."

Thriftmas Market

The SU organised a Thriftmas Market on the 30th of November, 2023, highlighting student driven ventures and entrepreneurial talent. The enterprises showcasing on the day included prints, cards, children's books, clothing, tote bags, jewellery, crochet and knitted products, all designed and developed by students. The market encouraged students to support local, Irish and independent businesses, and highlighted the innovation that is present and flourishing within the student body. It also presented an alternative way for students to support small business, without using services like Amazon. The event incorporated a pop-up Second Hand Clothes shop by the Galway Simon Community and numerous food stalls selling tasty baked treats, drinks and oriental foods.

110

In the last 3 years University of Galway has spun out **14** new companies, gained **27** patents, licensed **42** technologies, and launched **110** projects with industry.



Elizabeth Busari (second right) receives the Séamus McDermott Entrepreneurial Scholarship 2024 from Dr. Natalie Walsh, Director of Entrepreneurial Development, Aidan Corless, Chairman of The Liffey Trust, and President Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh.

SDG 10

Reduced Inequalities



Tinsmith Tom McDonnell.
Photo Credit: Aengus McMahon.

A Snapshot of Progress



- New Multi-Sensory Room launched to make campus more inclusive
- Improving access and learning for people with intellectual disability
- Assessing the evidence: Migration, Environment and Climate Change in Ireland
- Using Children's Rights to Recover from the Global Pandemic
- Imirce data base of Irish American emigrant data
- Launch of new Race Equality Framework and Action Plan
- University of Galway celebrates Irish Traveller Ethnicity Week
- The Nelson Mandela Anti Racism Week
- Launch of Accessible Bike Shelters
- Sustainability meetups that are open to all



204 Publications

(Scopus Publications 2017-2021)

9.4%

In AY23/24 - 9.4% of University of Galway students registered for Disability Support



Our staff networks are a core part of our commitment to promote an inclusive environment. University of Galway has a number of active staff networks including University Women's Network, International Staff Network and LGBT + Staff Network.



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Students and Learning

New Multi-Sensory Room launched to make campus more inclusive

Recognising that Universities can be a crowded and noisy environment, which can impact learning and work, especially for neurodiverse students, University of Galway has opened a new Multi-Sensory Room. The aim of the Multi-Sensory Room is to provide a safe space where users can relax and stimulate their senses in a controlled manner. The Multi-Sensory Room was designed in consultation with students and specialist staff and is equipped with interactive and integrated lighting, visual, vibroacoustic and sound effects that create an immersive and customisable sensory experience for students. The Multi-Sensory Room is designed to be a safe space for students to self-regulate by adjusting their sensory environment. Users will be able to choose from a range of calming or stimulating, integrated lighting, sound and vibroacoustic arrangements, to suit their sensory needs, and unwind on comfortable furniture. Soft furnishings and sensory stress-relieving items complete the experience. The opening of the multi-sensory room forms part of University of Galway's suite of indoor and outdoor initiatives designed to provide sensory friendly spaces enabling students to feel regulated and supporting their engagement in college life.

Improving access and learning for people with intellectual disability

University of Galway has secured funding to improve access to higher education and learning for people with an intellectual disability. The funding will be used to put in place a new programme for students with an intellectual disability called Cumas - a Foundational Certificate in Learning and Community. The aim of the programme is to provide students with a third level learning experience which will develop their knowledge, social engagement, and employment prospects. University of Galway students on Cumas will take part in social activities and academic classes with students without intellectual disabilities as well as participating in classes with other students with intellectual disabilities. The programme will provide students with work experience through placement opportunities. While the primary aims of the programme caters to the students and their needs, it is also envisioned that the University of Galway community and the wider community will benefit by developing a greater understanding and appreciation of the potential of people with intellectual disabilities. The funding is being provided to progress the National Access Plan which highlights the need to improve and increase representation in higher education for students with a disability, including students with autism and those with an intellectual disability.

Research

Assessing the evidence: Migration, Environment and Climate Change in Ireland

A report published by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with the Ryan Institute at the University of Galway has found that the increasing frequency and severity of extreme storms, flooding, and sea level rise, means that some communities in Ireland are becoming increasingly vulnerable to climate change, due to much of Ireland's population residing in coastal zones. The IOM report, *Assessing the Evidence: Migration, Environment and Climate Change in Ireland*, also includes advantages and opportunities for Ireland to strengthen climate resilience, including by better supporting vulnerable communities and improving understanding of the advantages of human mobility and of people on the move. The IOM Country Profile for Ireland encourages government and relevant stakeholders to consider key challenges and opportunities arising from the migration, environment, and climate change nexus. SDG target 10.7 calls on countries to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. The IOM Country Profile contributes to the realisation of SDG target 10.7 in Ireland, the EU and globally.

Using Children's Rights to Recover from the Global Pandemic

The *Building Children's Futures: Using Children's Rights to Recover from the Global Pandemic* project aimed to develop an understanding of how a child rights-based approach can be embedded in decision-making in times of emergency. The project partners include Foroige, the Children's Rights Alliance, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth, Eurochild, Tusla and the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, who led this research. The researchers collected data in 2023 from disadvantaged children to gain their perspective of what rights were impacted during the pandemic. In addition, interviews were conducted with public officials with decision making responsibilities during the pandemic in Ireland to examine how children's rights were considered. The data provides evidence of the inequalities experienced by the children, and of how children's rights could have been better considered and protected during the pandemic.

This research is part of an international project working towards the development and implementation of Child Right Impact Assessment (CRIA) for use across Irish and European policy decision making processes. Ireland's new national strategy Young Ireland refers to this project and to the project partners role in informing the co-development of CRIAs to better understand how a children's rights approach can be embedded in policy decision making.

Imirce data base of Irish American emigrant data

In 2020–21, deep in the Covid 19 pandemic, the University of Galway received, as a gift, from historian Kerby A. Miller, a vast collection of transcripts of letters, memoirs and other ephemera composed by Irish emigrants to North America from the 1600s through the twentieth century. In accepting this extraordinary gift, the University committed itself to a two-stage project: first, making Miller's transcripts available to scholars and the public via an online database, and second, continuing Miller's work of collection and transcription, through appeals for additional materials to be added to that database. In March 2024 the University launched Imirce, a database to which the first tranche of Miller's materials had been uploaded; his entire collection—c.7,000 items—will be online by the end of 2024. The Imirce team, meanwhile, appealed for people to send them material to be added to the database. To date some 1,300 individual items have been received, with the team made aware of many hundreds of others [Read more here](#).



Adam Harris, AsIAm CEO, with (left) Izzy Tiernan, University of Galway SU Vice-President, and Helen Maher, University of Galway Vice-President EDI launch the new Multi Sensory Room. Credit - Martina Regan

Community Engagement

Launch of new Race Equality Framework and Action Plan

The launch of the University of Galway's first Race Equality Framework & Action Plan 2023-2027 took place in November 2023, in tandem with the launch of University of Galway Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2022/23. The Race Equality Framework and Action Plan provides a clear roadmap that fulfils the race equality goals laid out in the University Vision and Strategy 2020 to 2025 and University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020 to 2025. In consultation with the Race Equality committee, five thematic areas have been identified for inclusion in the Framework and Action Plan. These include leadership strategy and policy; recruitment progression and supports; data monitoring and reporting; community, communications and culture; scholarship and curriculum. The plan underlines the importance of supporting international and ethnic minority students, raising awareness about anti-racism and promoting race equality and human rights. The Framework and Action Plan are underpinned by the values of Respect, Openness, Sustainability and Excellence, while rooted in a commitment to human rights, democracy, and the rule of law that also recognises University of Galway's obligations to advance race equality, while respecting and protecting human rights. The Race Equality Framework and Action Plan progresses not only SDG 10 but also advances SDGs 3, 4, 5, 8, 16, 17 across its 120 actions and 5 thematic areas. These efforts help foster a more inclusive and equitable university environment, thus addressing broader issues related to diversity and inclusion.

University of Galway celebrates Irish Traveller Ethnicity Week

University of Galway celebrated Irish Traveller Ethnicity Week with a week-long series of events across campus ending on March 1st - marking the anniversary of the Government formally recognising Irish Travellers as a distinct ethnic group and celebrating their culture and heritage including music, craft traditions and language. Highlights from the programme included: The Michael McDonagh Award presented at the opening ceremony to a staff member who has shown leadership in promoting Irish Traveller History & Culture; Traveller Living Exhibition showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Irish Traveller life in the 1950s; Traveller Education and Anti-racism talk by Dr Hannagh McGinley, a member of the Irish Traveller community, who talks about her journey through education and working life; Galway Traveller Movement display sharing stories of five Leaving Certificate students and their school experiences as members of the Irish Traveller Community; Story Telling and Music; Mincéirs Whiden Society Coffee Morning; and Traveller History and Culture discussion led by the University's Traveller Education Officer. The week also included a series of events to highlight the supports available to students, including information sessions on the University of Sanctuary programme and on pathways into and through education.

The Nelson Mandela Anti Racism Week

The Nelson Mandela Anti-Racism Week at University of Galway was launched by Zak Moradi, a Kurdish-Irish hurler and author of *Life Begins in Leitrim*. The week-long programme of events coincided with International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, observed each year on March 21st. Highlights for the week included the inaugural Tom Molineaux Elite Athlete Scholarship for ethnic minority students in honour of the slave who boxed his way to freedom and is buried in Galway. The programme also commemorated the 21st anniversary of Nelson Mandela being awarded an honorary doctorate by University of Galway in 2003. Marking the historic day, South African Ambassador to Ireland, Mabet van Rensburg, delivered a keynote address at the University on Friday March 22nd, which was followed by a panel discussion entitled 'Strengthening Relations Between University of Galway and South Africa'. Other distinguished speakers during the week included Dr Mads Gilbert who delivered a lecture on 'Health Apartheid in Palestine' and Francesca Albanese and Maha Abdallah who discussed the situation in Gaza and the 'Implications of South Africa's Genocide Case at the International Court of Justice'. Other events hosted throughout the week included workshops, exhibitions, live music concerts, race equality training, interactive sessions, seminars, and panel discussions. The School of Education hosted two workshops as part of the weeks activities: Tight Space – a youth-led workshop exploring the Direct Provision system and Belonging & Anti-racism: Together we make a difference delivered in conjunction with World Wise Global Schools and Galway Educate Together.

Sustainability meetups that are open to all

The JE Cairnes School of Business and Economics host sustainability meet ups on the last Wednesday of each month, that are open to all. The meetings are informal, bringing people from all over the college together to chat about sustainability. The format includes short news updates from students and staff, intended as a platform for sharing information and best practises related to sustainability. Visitors from outside organisations drop in with their sustainability questions or news too. The overall aim is to make everyone feel welcome, build a sense of community among students and staff interested in sustainability and help facilitate new collaborations. Overall, these meet-ups aim to create an inclusive and supportive environment where sustainability is a shared interest and priority.

2024 marks **25 years** of the Access Centre at University of Galway creating opportunities for people to find pathways into higher education. Since its foundation in 1999, more than 3,500 people have been supported by the Access Centre, with the numbers of students from groups traditionally underrepresented in university continuing to grow.

Themabela Lubimbi and Vusi Gugulethu Thabethe (Masters students at University of Galway) attending Nelson Mandela Anti-Racism Week 2023.



Launch of Accessible Bike Shelters

The installation of new accessible bike shelters across the University of Galway's campus further embeds sustainability on our campus, providing families and people with impaired mobility a new facility to store their bikes. The United Nations has highlighted the benefits of cycling for environmental and health reasons. For those with impaired mobility, such as the elderly or individuals with physical disabilities, a lack of facilities can act as a major barrier to the uptake of cycling. Similarly for families who may rely on larger cycling equipment such as cargo bikes, a lack of storage facilities may act as a barrier to engaging with cycling as a means of transport to school and work. For these reasons, the installation of new bike shelters represents exciting progress on the SDGs on our campus.



SDG 11

Sustainable Cities and Communities



A Snapshot of Progress

- The Community University Sustainability Partnership
- The ALIVE Volunteering programme
- Bachelor of Science (Social Sciences) programme
- Indiana Galway collaboration - with a Presidential twist
- Empty urban spaces becoming part of circular economies
- Globalisation, Landscape, and Environment in Modern Ireland workshop
- Drawing on behavioural science research to implement active travel infrastructure
- Stop Flood: Developing novel approaches for forecasting of flood events
- Galway National Park City
- Galway International Arts Festival and University of Galway five-year partnership



183 Publications

(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)

University of Galway is proud to house the archive of former President of Ireland and United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson. University of Galway is also a partner of The Mary Robinson Centre in the former President's hometown of Ballina, Co Mayo.



With sustainability as a core value and a mission dedicated to servicing the public good, SDG 11 is central to the University of Galway's strategic approach.



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
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Students and Learning

The Community University Sustainability Partnership

The Community University Sustainability Partnership (CUSP) is a strategic initiative aimed at embedding sustainability across the University's teaching, learning, research, campus operations and community engagement activities. CUSP fosters a collaborative approach bringing together students, staff and external partners to address global sustainability challenges at the local level. CUSP is structured as a multi-disciplinary voluntary team of over 30 students and staff from across the University of Galway and community partners, all working together to showcase how a university can become a role model for the transition to a sustainable future. CUSP deliver its sustainability agenda by drawing on a [learn-live-lead](#) model to embedding the SDGs. The focus of learn is to continue to embed SDG literacy into all aspects of university learning and research. The focus of live is to implement the principles of the SDGs throughout campus operations and engagement activities. From a lead perspective, the aim is to play a central and transformative role in attaining the SDGs by 2030. In 2024 the University established a centralised Sustainability Office to support the work of CUSP and lead and promote sustainability in all aspects of university activities. Speaking at the launch of the Sustainability office, Deputy President and Registrar Prof Pól Ó Dochartaigh said "Our sustainability progress to date is rooted in the commitment over and above the day job of academics, professional support staff and, crucially, students. Through this new Sustainability Office, we are now formalising our support for them and building on our success in this space".

The ALIVE Volunteering programme

[ALIVE](#) is the University of Galway's dedicated programme to connect students with volunteering opportunities. ALIVE harness, support and reward students' voluntary activity across the university campus, Galway city, and wider communities to develop their own practical skills and civic awareness. From developing skills such as teamwork, leadership, communication, and problem solving to instilling a sense of social responsibility and community engagement, the programme offers many benefits to students. During AY23/24 408 students were awarded the President's Award for Volunteering and a virtual recognition piece is in production to acknowledge the huge contributions made by our students. [Volunteering activities](#) ranged from supporting University of Galway clubs and societies, fundraising for local community groups (for example, Galway Simon Community and Coldvember) and contributing to the work of local community organisations (such as Macnas, Just 3, Enable Ireland, and Jigsaw Galway). Community partners included Children in Hospital Ireland, Galway Youth Climate Assembly, COPE Galway, and Galway Rape Crisis Centre, among many others.

Bachelor of Science (Social Sciences) programme

Our pioneering Bachelor of Science (Social Sciences) programme in the College of Arts, Social Sciences & Celtic Studies is underpinned over four years by a strong focus on Sustainability offering students a deeper understanding of this concept in terms of its economic, social, and environmental pillars. In year one, students are introduced to Sustainability through the lens of the Social Sciences with specific modules that focus on issues and topics such as climate change, urban planning and design, rural (re)development, homelessness, equality and diversity. In year two students take the Introduction to Sustainability module in addition to research methods that strongly focus on economic, social, and environmental Sustainability. The programme has built strong links to NGOs and social and environmental organisations over the years, and an internship in year three provides opportunities for students to immerse themselves deeper in understanding Sustainability and work in this domain. In year four, students again refocus and take a core Environmental Sociology module and undertake independent research that strongly focuses on Sustainability. With such strong attention to the subject, the B.Sc. (Social Sciences) is currently discussing a change of name to further emphasise and reinforce Sustainability throughout the programme and to prepare students for careers and life that deeply embody the principles of Sustainability.

Indiana Galway collaboration - with a Presidential twist

A faculty-led group of students from Indiana University spent Spring Semester 2024 in Galway, when they completed a programme with History, Folklore, Literature and Science components. During the semester, the group spent time in the University of Galway's Centers in Gaoth Dobhair and Carna. In Carna, the faculty of the Centre provided classes on the natural and cultural history of Conamara, including an exploration of flora and fauna of the local boglands. The group also used the laboratory in the University's Carna Research Station to mount seaweed specimens that the students gathered on the beach on herbarium sheets and perform a range of experiments. Likewise, in Gaoth Dobhair, the group explored the strand of An Ghlaisigh with Anna Ní Bhroin and Conchúr Mac Giolla Éain (University of Galway) and David McCann (Sea Collective). During the semester, the Indiana University group joined faculty and staff of the University of Galway in paying a courtesy call on President Michael D. Higgins, a graduate of both universities. The Indiana-Galway collaboration helped the Universities engage and promote understanding on a range of SDGs.

Research

Empty urban spaces becoming part of circular economies

A Geography professor is researching the re-validation of nominally 'empty' urban spaces with a focus on how these become part of circular economies. This project is challenging the idea that urban realities and practices can best be captured by notions of 'presence', arguing instead for alternative understandings of urban materialities that entail and encourage sustainable forms of urban engagement. Examples include urban gardening (rooftop and ground-occupying), the use of hitherto unused spaces below motorways, the covering of roads, the re-dedication of road surfaces, changes in use of below-ground parking garages and other urban practices. Project findings are presented to students, urban planners and the lay public alike.

Globalisation, Landscape, and Environment in Modern Ireland workshop

The Globalisation, Landscape, and Environment in Modern Ireland, 1922-2022' workshop was held at University of Galway, 29-30 June 2023. This two-day workshop, which drew together speakers from Ireland, the UK, and the United States, was examined how the landscape of Ireland has been transformed by the experience of globalisation, how that change has manifested, and with what consequences for local communities. We were particularly interested in foregrounding the structural factors that have shaped Irish responses to environmental change - and how to tell those stories. How can we build narratives that navigate between a planetary level of analysis (climate change) and the local contexts in which those changes were experienced?



University of Galway has appointed a Sean-Nós Singer-in-Residence. The living link with the sean-nós song tradition and other aspects of the vernacular arts of the Conamara Gaeltacht are a key element of the work being carried out by the Centre for Irish Studies at University of Galway.

Drawing on behavioural science research to implement active travel infrastructure

Replacing car travel with walking and cycling is at the core of the shift to healthier and more sustainable societies. It is important to implement active travel infrastructure - things like cycle lanes and paths for walking that are safe from traffic - to help tackle the climate crisis and help people live healthier lives. But policymakers in multiple countries regularly contend with two obstacles: designing infrastructure that people will make use of and securing public support for implementation. The authors reviewed and synthesised relevant research from behavioural science that sheds light on how to overcome these two obstacles. Given available literature, we focused on cycling infrastructure. Research on moderators of the success of active travel initiatives point to the importance of proximity, connectivity, and safety perceptions, particularly among women, older adults and children. Another finding of note is that there is no evidence that removing parking spaces to facilitate cycle lanes harms the revenues of local businesses: the international evidence suggests instead that the effects on retail are positive or neutral. Overall, this [paper](#) offers an evidence-based guide for policymakers to design and implement active travel infrastructure, seen through the lens of behavioural science. Funding provided by the NTA and Fingal County Council.

Stop Flood: Developing novel approaches for forecasting of flood events

The [StopFloods4.ie](#) project investigates the development of a novel flood forecasting system for prediction of coastal-fluvial floods with the aim of pioneering a solution in the form of a robust, cost-effective and time-efficient framework for flood forecasting in conurbations across Ireland. This new system will use state-of-the-art solutions in internet of things, statistics, hydrodynamic modelling, machine learning, AI techniques and cloud computing systems. The StopFloods4.ie project team believes the resilient systems have not yet been matured/demonstrated in operational model. Our team combines researchers from diverse scientific and computational disciplines (from engineering, natural sciences, IT and economics) as well as the involvement of practitioners and policy makers from the Irish state/semi-state organisations (such as OPW, Met Éireann and Marine Institute). Beyond the scientific value, the project will directly benefit society by mitigating flood risks in flood prone areas and increasing people's safety. This project is funded by SFI.



Community Engagement

Galway National Park City

Launched at the University of Galway in 2021, the [Galway National Park City](#) initiative represented the first time in Ireland that stakeholders from across all sectors of local society came together to help develop an urban environment that undertook actions to tackle the interconnecting Climate and Biodiversity Crises and to promote Sustainability. With the President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins as patron, renowned environmentalist Duncan Stewart as its national champion and with over 100 champions drawn from all sectors of local society [including from the University of Galway](#), it was and is responsible for flagship projects such as the Galway City Youth Climate Assemblies, in collaboration with multiple champions such as Youthwork Ireland Galway, that is hosted twice yearly by the University of Galway and the ATU attended by students from all of the city's secondary schools; the provision of Outdoor Classroom kits at four natural heritage sites across the city; a joint submission by schools and educationalists to the NCCA on the proposed new Leaving Certificate course 'Climate Action and Sustainable Development'; and the mapping of traditional greenways within the city's boundaries. Over the coming months its website will become a unique repository for sustainability-themed projects from across all sectors to inspire positive change.

New student accommodation

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science Simon Harris T.D. officially opened Baile na Breacóige - Dunlin Village - the new student residences at University of Galway. The project on the north campus of the University consists of 674 bedrooms and includes 35 accessible bedrooms, located across all floors, designed in line with best practice for people with disabilities. Dunlin Village represents the second major student accommodation project that the university has completed in recent years bringing our total number of on campus student accommodation beds to nearly 2,000. The University is committed to continuing to work with students and Government to provide further, more affordable accommodation choices for our students.

Minister Harris with University of Galway students at the official opening of the new student accommodation. Photo Credit: Andrew Downes



Galway International Arts Festival and University of Galway announce five-year partnership

Following 13 years of partnership, the University of Galway have announced a new [five-year partnership with Galway International Arts Festival \(GIAF\)](#) which will see even closer collaboration between the organizations. Galway International Arts Festival is a cultural organization that holds an annual arts festival in Galway, Ireland. The new partnership will see the introduction of a new course in creative arts management; the development of SELECTED, the professional development programme for emerging artists, theatre makers, curators and producers studying at University of Galway, and the Festival Volunteer Programme.

Additionally, the partnership will see development of the First Thought Talks programme; further development of the GIAF archive housed in the University library; an exploration of how the partnership can help to develop the creative industries in the West; and further development of GIAF's volunteer programme.

The Greater Galway Charter for Sustainable Urbanism

University of Galway and Atlantic Technological University (Galway) have come together with the Mayor of the City of Galway and the Galway Chamber to announce and sign [the Greater Galway Charter for Sustainable Urbanism](#) - a manifesto for long-term strategic thinking and planning for the region. The Greater Galway Charter is intended as a living, working document which helps to stimulate cross community conversations about the kind of city and places signatories want for Galway by 2070, and the steps to begin today to deliver that 50-year vision. The Greater Galway Charter is underpinned by four anchoring Principles that guide what Galway should aspire to be as a City and a Place, namely: Sustainable; Inclusive; Responsive and Proud. Everyone interested in the future direction of development of Galway, and anyone who shares the passion for the city of the future, can sign up to signal support for the Charter and be part of the conversation.

Photographic work exploring the relationship of north-west Donegal emigrants and their descendants in Glasgow with the landscape of their ancestral homeplace

In August 2023 artist Christina McBride had an exhibition, *Criocho an Chroí / Heartland*, in An Gailearaí, Gaoth Dobhair, of photographic work exploring the relationship of north-west Donegal emigrants and their descendants in Glasgow with the landscape of their ancestral homeplace. The images in the exhibition were developed using sustainable elements found in nature, for example, heather. Later, in November 2023, McBride had a second exhibition, *Thall Udaí / Over By* at Sean-Scoil Bhun an Inbhir, Gaoth Dobhair, comprising photographs and recordings from Cartlann Ghlaschú-Ghaoth Dobhair / The Glasgow-Gaoth Dobhair Archive, a repository developed by McBride during a residency at the University of Galway Centre in Gaoth Dobhair in autumn 2022. McBride's residency was made possible by the University's collaboration with Údarás na Gaeltachta and Ealaín na Gaeltachta. It benefited too from the support of colleagues in the Glasgow School of Art, the University of Strathclyde, and the Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny. Both McBride's exhibitions attracted much local media attention and the Irish Times carried a feature on her work.



University of Galway students were the winners of the [Digital and Concept Design and Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship](#) categories of the Smarter Travel Student Awards 2024.



University of Galway Vice-President for Engagement, Dr Paul Dodd, and Galway International Arts Festival Artistic Director, Paul Fahy, at the announcement of a new five-year partnership between the University and GIAF.



A Snapshot of Progress

- Launch of new programme in Sustainability Leadership
- SDG 12 focused micro-credentials
- Recycle Runway
- Advancing green public procurement practises in Ireland
- The Green Labs programme
- Students' Union led Wasted Week 2024
- University of Galway alumna Dorothy Creavan on innovating sustainable fashion at Rent the Runway
- Handbook of Sustainable Procurement Guidelines and Criteria
- Elimination of single-use cups on campus

SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production



Photo Credit: Aengus McMahon

net-waste

University of Galway is a zero waste to landfill organisation since 2018



217 Publications

(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)

10th

University of Galway is ranked 10th in the world for SDG 12 in the 2024 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024 edition.



University of Galway is home to the first lab in Europe to awarded Green Lab certification and all 32 labs in our Alice Perry Engineering Building are certified as green.



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Students and Learning

Launch of new programme in Sustainability Leadership

University of Galway has launched a new [Master programme in sustainability leadership](#). The programme aims to cultivate future leaders equipped to drive sustainability initiatives across various sectors. The programme includes mandatory modules directly aligned to SDG 12, for example, Responsible Management and Leadership; Consumption and the Consumerist Society; and Sustainable Innovation and covers key topics including sustainable business practises, environmental governance and strategic sustainability management. Students gain hand on experience through internships, consultancy projects and fieldwork. Additionally, the programme includes an immersive international study visit and this global experience can help students understand diverse sustainability challenges. The new master's programme expands the University of Galway's suite of sustainability-focused postgraduate courses. The new Sustainability Leadership course provides students with training in the leadership skills needed to address the challenges and opportunities that contemporary businesses face in the areas of environmental sustainability and corporate leadership.

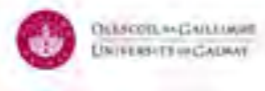
SDG 12 focused micro-credentials

University of Galway is offering a suite of [new micro-credentials](#) focused on equipping students and professionals with the specialised knowledge and skills needed to progress SDG 12. Key micro-credentials that directly support SDG 12 include [Environmental Leadership for Organisations](#) and [Energy Management for Organisations](#) both focused on sustainable consumption and efficient resource use. [Sustainability Measurement: An Introduction to Life Cycle Management & Assessment](#) and [Green Lab Principles & Practise](#) offer specialised knowledge in implementing resource efficient practises in scientific research and industrial processes. The [Psychology of Consumer Behaviour](#) introduces the application of psychology to understanding consumer behaviour. The flexibility of these micro-credential courses which can be completed face to face, online or through blended learning, ensures that more people can benefit.

Recycle Runway

The Recycle Runway event was developed and led by University of Galway's Student Union Environmental Awareness & Sustainability officer, Molly Hickey, together with the SU Climate Crew. The event challenged students to create their own outfits using upcycled materials and aimed to demonstrate the beauty in upcycled things. Students' brilliant creations were displayed as part of a fashion-show and later showcased in the SU building, to generate awareness of upcycling and to highlight the theme of circular economy. Recycle Runway required substantial preparatory work, including spreading the word among students, arranging a music artist to perform, organising judges, mics, sound, a stage; all work that was carried out by the wonderful volunteering efforts of the Climate Crew. Recycle Runway was free to enter, and it was a requirement that the entrants did not buy any materials, making it fully accessible and maintaining a focus on sustainability. All sewing equipment required was provided by the SU. It is hoped that this initiative will become an annual event in the SU calendar. It is viewed as an excellent opportunity to highlight SDG 12 and generate awareness of the disadvantages of fast fashion. By students learning how to create their own outfits they are learning that it is possible to upcycle the clothes they already own and for something to be great, it does not always have to be new. In fact, one team participating in this year's event made their outfit using Shein bags and SDG badges they had left over from events, to highlight the impact fast fashion companies can have on the environment.

University of Galway eliminates disposable cups from all its catering outlets



Reusable cups

In support of our sustainability mission, all campus catering outlets have stopped using disposable cups. Help us to reduce waste on campus with a reusable cup.



Use a ceramic cup. Please leave the cup in the catering outlet.



Or bring your own reusable cup. Try out the cup washers around campus.

Research

Advancing green public procurement practises in Ireland

The [GAPS research project](#) focuses on advancing green public procurement (GPP) practices in Ireland, aligning with SDG 12. This initiative enables public authorities to make environmentally friendly purchases and contribute to climate change mitigation (SDG 13). The project encompasses case studies, a carbon footprint calculation tool, expert opinions, and a list of eco-labels to assist public procurers. It also provides cutting-edge GPP policies and practices for policymakers to make informed decisions. In November 2023, we exhibited in the GPP in Practice event organized by the EPA in Dublin, engaging with over 75 government and semi-government stakeholders. We shared our case studies and gathered theirs. Two stakeholders round tables were held in May and October 2023, each with around 40 public sector procurers and policymakers. Discussions included how the GPP toolkit can complement the current output of OGP and how to utilize the carbon footprint calculator tool, one of our deliverables. In January 2024, we presented a poster at the Wind Energy Ireland Conference (more than 200 participants), showcasing how our work supports the wind energy sector (SDG 7). Recently, in March, we completed a report based on a survey with GPP experts (local and EU), identifying barriers and enablers, policy recommendations, and support needed to transition from traditional to green markets and submitted a paper to the upcoming Civil Engineering Research in Ireland 2024.

The Green Labs programme

The Green Labs Programme at the University of Galway is a sustainability initiative aimed at reducing the environmental impact of laboratory practises. Laboratories are significant consumers of resources using much more energy water and plastic compared to typical office spaces. Greening of laboratories has been a particular focus for the University. Certification of all laboratories on campus as 'green' by 2025 has since been adopted as a flagship action and in 2024 all 32 labs in the Alice Perry Engineering Building are certified as green. A training programme has been developed entitled Green Labs: Principles and Practices and is available to lab-based staff and students. It covers key environmental concepts such as climate change, plastic pollution, sustainability, and biodiversity. In addition, the lifecycle of materials, and the environmental impact of the resources and equipment typically used in scientific laboratories are examined in some detail. These ideas form the backdrop to a focused study on how the organisation of, and practices in, scientific laboratories can be reformed to reduce their environmental footprint and be established on a more sustainable basis. A recent quote from University of Galway's Farrona lab 'We in the process of becoming a more sustainable lab. Laboratories consume high amounts of energy to run, and the Farrona lab want to make changes to this consumption to decrease our environmental impact and subsequently decrease our costs to run the lab. We have made changes, big and small to our lab in the last month alone which have significantly improved our sustainability practices, conserved energy, and allowed for more responsible consumption. We are currently attempting to gain the 'green labs certificate' which will cement our stance on sustainability for years to come'

Entrants to Recycle Runway, an event during Wasted Week 2024. It was organised by the Environmental and Sustainability Officer of University of Galway's Students' Union, Molly Hickey, and the SU Climate Crew to raise awareness of upcycling and the circular economy.



Community Engagement

Students' Union led Wasted Week 2024

Student led 'Wasted Week 2024' at University of Galway included a weeklong series of events exploring areas ranging from food waste and recycling to fast fashion and examining the impact waste has on the environment. Examples of events hosted throughout the week (29th January to 2nd February) included: an upcycling clothes workshop; a circular economy workshop; beach clean-up; a waste free potluck event; and a 'recycling on campus' awareness event. Speaking at the launch of Wasted Week 2024 Students' Union Environmental and Sustainability Officer Molly Hickey said: "It's fantastic to have the support of our student societies for Wasted week. University of Galway students are very climate conscious and want to play their part in making Galway and the world a better place for us all."

University of Galway alumna Dorothy Creavan on innovating sustainable fashion at Rent the Runway

An alumna of University of Galway highlights her journey with Rent the Runway in the Cois Coiribe article [In Conversation: Dorothy Creavan, Rent the Runway](#). Rent the Runway revolutionises the fashion industry by offering rentals from over 800 designers promoting a sustainable alternative to fast fashion and supporting a circular economy. As Vice president and Managing Director at the European headquarters in Galway, Creavan has been instrumental in advancing the company's digital transformation. Creavan attributes the company's growth to continuous innovation and highlights the strategic advantages of being in Galway. This location provides access to a rich talent pool from the University, fostering a collaborative environment. The partnership exemplifies the University's role in bolstering local business initiatives and advancing sustainable practises in the fashion industry.



The University's Park and Ride system is powered by electric buses and a network of internal and external drinking water fountains, electric car charging points and enclosed bicycle shelters have been installed campus wide.

Handbook of Sustainable Procurement Guidelines and Criteria

The University of Galway is committed to implementing sustainable procurement across its portfolio of contracts and frameworks. Sustainable public procurement (SPP) requires us to consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of all purchases, and to clearly communicate our expectations to bidders and contractors. It requires changes to the entire procurement cycle: from budgeting and planning to tendering and managing contracts. The University of Galway Procurement & Contracts Office has published a [new handbook](#) providing guidance on each of these stages and sets out examples of detailed criteria which can be inserted into tender documents. The handbook of Sustainable Procurement Guidelines and Criteria was published in 2023 and sets out the recommended practices and procedures to ensure successful application of SPP in line with our broader commitments on climate action and sustainability.

Elimination of single-use cups on campus

The SU is working closely with commercial services across campus to eliminate single-use cups campus-wide by September 2024. This will be achieved using a multifaceted approach, from communication and outreach to installing a new network of dishwashers and cup washers, applying a levy to single use cups and distributing reusable cups to students. The SU started by working with its own commercial services (SUCS) in the first instance, targeting Smokey's, Sult and the SU shop. This initiative, led by the SU, is designed to encourage life-long sustainable habits, that students will continue to lead on in their lives outside of the university, as well as reducing waste on campus.

University of Galway students collect unwanted household items for re-distribution to future students



SDG 13 Climate Action



Photo Credit: Aengus McMahon

A Snapshot of Progress

- University of Galway marks Earth Day with student sustainability leaders
- Report on our scientific understanding of climate change and its effects in Ireland
- University of Galway projects supported by EPA to address climate and environmental challenges
- INDICATE project
- University of Galway and the Cois Fharrige Gaeltacht at the COP 28 Climate Summit
- Engaging the public in the green energy transition
- CONNECTED: Driving Sustainable Change Through Community Empowerment and Cross-Sector Collaboration
- University of Galway Climate Action Roadmap
- Galway City Youth Climate Action Assembly
- New nationwide comedy show focuses on climate change



230 Publications

(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)



University of Galway is officially appointed as an **Observer organisation** to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.



The University of Galway Climate Action and Sustainability Policy (QA205) aims to embed carbon management into all University operations and processes with a view to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050 in line with global efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.



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Students and Learning

A wide variety of climate-related modules and programmes

University of Galway offers many courses and programmes to students interested in developing specialist knowledge and skills to understand and address the climate crisis. Examples of our master's programmes that allow a deeper dive into climate action include: [Climate Change](#), [Agriculture and Food Security](#); [Computer Science – Data Analytics](#); [Energy Systems Engineering](#); [Environment, Society and Development](#); [Environmental Leadership](#); [Global Environmental Economics](#); [Ocean, Atmosphere and Climate and Sustainable Resource Management](#). Led by an academic in Geography, our [Masters in International Development Practice](#) is designed around the SDGs. Students are linked to research projects with various international organisations working to progress the SDGs. The course director leads a research project on migration, social protection, and climate change; has attended the last three UNFCCC COPs; and facilitated a side event for UNICEF/World Bank on adaptive social protection for adaptation and loss and damage at COP 28.

University of Galway marks Earth Day with student sustainability leaders

University of Galway marked Earth Day 2024 by launching a new centralised Sustainability office and announcing the winners of the Student Sustainability Leadership Awards 2024, namely, Molly Hickey and Peter O'Neill. Molly Hickey is a second year BA with human rights student from Co Laois and the SU Environmental Awareness and Sustainability Officer. Peter O'Neill is a first-year history student from Ballymacward, Mountbellew, Co Galway. Peter has been involved in youth activism for four years, culminating in representing Ireland at the 13th UNESCO Youth Forum. Both students receive a €4,000 prize and will take part in an 8-week internship with the University's new Sustainability Office this summer. The office has been launched to lead and promote sustainability in all aspects of university activities including teaching, learning, research, operations, governance, and engagement endeavours. Its aim is to empower the University's diverse communities of staff, students and partners to work together in the development of a sustainable campus and to deliver on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

SU Climate Crew

The SU Environmental Awareness & Sustainability officer chairs a student climate forum which convenes at the start of each academic year. The focus of the [Climate Crew](#) is to provide an active forum for students that are interested in making the campus more sustainable and eco-friendlier. A plan is made at the start of the year for events and engagement activities that will take place throughout the year. For AY 23-24 these included for example, a student led environmental summit and SDG Quiz as part of SDG week; participating in the Fridays for Future climate strikes throughout the year; Waste Week; Donate Don't Dump; Recycle Runway; Build a Bug Hotel workshop; Glassary; and guest speakers covering different topics of interest to students such as eco anxiety, climate ambassador programme, fracking etc. The Climate Crew offers many benefits, from raising awareness about climate change and environmental issues among students and the wider community to serving as a platform for student activism and advocacy on climate related issues. Climate Crew offers opportunities for leaderships, teamwork, project management and skills development and is a great way for like minded students to come together, connect and deliver impactful projects.

Climathon

Led by University of Galway's Ryan Institute and in partnership with the Portershed which is a co-working and collaborative space for technology-focused innovation driven enterprises within the Galway City Innovation District, the 2023 [Galway City Climathon](#) took place in October 2023. Climathon is a hackathon event where interdisciplinary teams compete to identify climate innovations that can deliver climate action. Climathon Galway forms part of one united global initiative that is seeking to identify innovations that can accelerate climate action. Competing teams engaged in a hackathon (along with sister teams globally), to identify innovations and scalable business models for climate mitigation and resilience at city scale. The 2023 Galway Climathon built from the energy and dynamism of University of Galway students and researchers, seeking to develop and scale innovations towards a zero-carbon footprint horizon-point for Galway City.

Research

Report on our scientific understanding of climate change and its effects in Ireland

Academics at the Irish Centre for High-End Computing (ICHEC) and University of Galway have played a key role in Ireland's first comprehensive report on our scientific understanding of climate change and its effects on Ireland. The objective of [Ireland's Climate Change Assessment Report](#) is to deliver a comprehensive report on our understanding of climate change; the option to respond to the challenges it poses; to identify opportunities that may arise from the planned transition to a climate neutral, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate resilient economy and society. ICHEC worked to research existing science and write an extended report on adaptation research and policy in Ireland. Also contributing to the ICCA Report from University of Galway were academic from the School of Geography, Archaeology, and Irish Studies; Ryan Institute; School of Natural Sciences; and School of Physics. For example, Dr Nessa Cronin, along with other University of Galway colleagues, was invited to make an expert submission to the National Climate Change Assessment Report, Volume 4: Realising the Benefits of Transition and Transformation, published in January 2024 by the Irish Environmental Protection Agency. Dr Cronin's contribution was on the area of 'Culture and Climate Change', where she argued for the critical role that culture plays in terms of bridging the gap between climate ambition and climate action. The key finding from the ICCA Report is that Ireland's climate is changing, and it will be the reality until excessive greenhouse gases cease and a new climate equilibrium is achieved. The report also states that although early concerted action can limit global temperatures by the end of the century, sea levels will continue to rise beyond 2100.

University of Galway projects supported by EPA to address climate and environmental challenges

Four academics at University of Galway have been awarded funding from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for projects to address climate and environment challenges. The research covers the areas of air quality; radioactive material in building products; climate resilience for bridges; and optimising resources. Projects include Towards a Climate Resilient Adapted National Network of Bridges; Sources of PM2.5 in the Air of Irish Towns; Investigation of naturally occurring radioactive material (NORM) in building materials in Ireland and Framework for Optimising Resources through Strategic Environmental Assessment. It is envisaged that the projects will address knowledge gaps, both current and future, to provide robust evidence to support the implementation of effective environmental policies in Ireland.

Applying social marketing to peatlands and people

For the first time, systems social marketing research is being applied to peatlands and people in Europe. A professor in social marketing from the University of Galway conceived of, initiated, designed, and is the systems change lead researcher for the EU LIFE Integrated Project [Peatlands and People](#) (P&P), a €27 million 7.5-year climate action grant (2020-2027). This involved building a national Irish consortium of Bord na Móna (BnM), EPA, National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) and ERINN Innovation with the University of Galway as the lead academic partner. P&P is an expression of systems social marketing research, at scale, to get from fossil fuel and industrial scale extraction on peatlands to regenerative ecosystems bursting with biodiversity, climate solution and sustainable tourism opportunities as part of a Just Transition in the Irish Midlands. Within P&P, Christine has direct responsibility for ensuring the integrated nature of the project, as part of the project team overseeing ecological, economic, and cultural change. Christine is the lead researcher for cultural and social change via Ireland's Climate House, Pillar 3 and securing €30 million capital funding to co-locate a Peatlands Center of Excellence (Pillar 1) and Green Accelerator (Pillar 2).

INDICATE project

THE INDICATE project was delivered between May 2023 and May 2024 to accelerate the integration of Whole Life Carbon (WLC) into Ireland's building and construction regulations, public procurement, and industry. INDICATE supported efforts to generate much-needed building-level WLC data in Europe. This data must be generated now if industry and policy action on decarbonising buildings are to be brought in line with the 1.5 °C target from the 2015 Paris COP21 agreement. The project aligns with SDG 13 Climate Action through carbon accounting and budgeting. It supports creating a final national Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) methodology approach, data infrastructure, and agreed methodology. Using a nationally defined methodology fully aligned with Level(s) and an agreed national database means Ireland can align with Europe, affording greater comparability and learning. As part of the project, 30-50 validated LCAs have been conducted. Developing an open-access online platform ensured that the data is easy to interrogate, analyse, and use by industry, policymakers, and researchers. The project was delivered through [Construct Innovate](#), Ireland's national research centre for construction technology and innovation, with core personnel from the University of Galway, the Irish Green Building Council and University College Dublin in the project delivery team, supported by Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).



University of Galway and the Cois Fharráige Gaeltacht at the COP 28 Climate Summit

University of Galway was represented at the [COP 28 Climate Summit](#) in Dubai by [five leading experts](#), who are engaged in education, research, and innovation activities to address the climate crisis. This is the first time the University has been represented with official observer status. To coincide with University of Galway's official observer status a [Dear World](#) message from a group of young people was shared. The letter, and [video](#) have been created to articulate the hopes and fears about the climate crisis of students in two post-primary schools in the Cois Fharráige Gaeltacht in Galway. They shared this message with the University of Galway researchers attending COP. The Cois Fharráige go COP project was developed through three moderated [workshops](#) with 20 secondary school students and their teachers in the Cois Fharráige Gaeltacht community in west Galway. Workshop structure and content was developed and led by University of Galway.

Engaging the public in the green energy transition

Work carried out by researchers from the JE Cairnes School of Business and Economics aims to provide economic data, policy advice and recommendations on ways to engage the public in the green energy transition. [Recent projects](#) funded by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) uses focus groups and choice experiment surveys with members of the public in Ireland and those residing in coastal areas to provide data on the social value of intermittency management, greater public engagement in renewable energy projects and preference heterogeneity for offshore wind development. The findings indicate a willingness to forgo personal benefits by the general population to ensure the provision of local benefits and positive preferences for intermittency management by those with pro-wind energy perceptions. Results also indicate that gender and experience influence the acceptance of new offshore wind energy developments in Ireland. Recent research, funded by Interreg, assesses the preferences of international tourists visiting Tenerife for hydrogen fuelled hire cars. This work identifies potential early adopters with high willingness to pay values for hydrogen fuel cell vehicles.

CONNECTED: Driving Sustainable Change Through Community Empowerment and Cross-Sector Collaboration

Initiated by the University of Galway's Construct Innovate, CONNECTED unites communities, local governments, and academia to drive effective climate action through innovative cross-sector collaboration. Launched in 2023 with support from Galway City, Mayo, Sligo, and Galway County Councils, alongside various non-profit organizations, this initiative empowers communities to actively shape their sustainable futures. This integrative approach bridges gaps in climate knowledge and strengthens collaboration among diverse stakeholders, positioning communities at the forefront of sustainable development. By co-designing tools that integrate community input with academic insights, CONNECTED enhances local capacities for climate action. These tools include resources for establishing committee structures and strategic engagement mechanisms, a novel carbon footprint app that aids individuals in making informed daily decisions about carbon consumption, and engagement tools that facilitate active community participation. Additionally, the initiative gathers and disseminates inspirational case studies on climate action, adaptation, and mitigation, serving as educational resources and motivational benchmarks for communities.

Cois Fharráige go COP project and 'Dear World' message from Coláiste Chroí Mhuire, An Spidéal students – Chloe Ní Choisdealbha, Ella Nic Dhomhnaill, Kate Ní Raghallaigh.
Photo- still from video production.



Community Engagement

Climate Action Roadmap

The University of Galway has published its [updated 2030 Climate Action Roadmap](#) in accordance with the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate 2024. The roadmap outlines our vision, coordination, organisation, mobilisation and planning to reduce the university's carbon footprint and take other climate actions. The Roadmap is signed by the President and Deputy President & Registrar, demonstrating the commitment of the University leadership. The University has achieved an enormous amount through the dedication and expertise of our green team and community engagement. Since 2006, we have improved our energy efficiency by almost 50%, on the cusp of achieving the 2030 public sector target. Meanwhile, we have reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 47% since 2006 (or by 35% compared to our 2016-2018 baseline). These figures are all the more impressive considering the expansion in our student population and facilities in recent years. We aim to exceed our public sector targets in these areas and we have identified a number of carbon reduction projects and programmes. Our award-winning energy team has demonstrated our capacity to deliver innovative, sustainable projects and we look forward to continuing our collaborations with funding agencies in Ireland and internationally. We have also implemented and surpassed the other requirements of the Climate Action Mandate in areas such as energy management systems, digitalisation of processes, green procurement, low-carbon construction, food waste, water, waste, single-use items, sustainable transport and sustainable buildings. As we approach the end of our current sustainability strategy, we are reflecting on progress and engaging the University community on our next sustainability strategy to 2030. These strategies will be mindful of the urgency of climate action, Ireland's climate ambitions and the leading role played by the University of Galway.

Peatland Futures

In December 2023 University of Galway hosted the [Peatlands Future event](#) bringing together experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to deliberate on the future of peatland and wetland research and innovation in Ireland. Representatives from government departments, universities and community and farming organisations took part in the event. The event featured two workshops aimed at shaping the future of peatland research. The first discussed the proposal for a National Peatland Centre of Excellence, while a second focused on creating a policy summary and providing actionable strategies for informed decision-making in peatland conservation. A crucial component of Peatlands Future was the collective call to action for wetland and peatland restoration and conservation. Following on from this event, University of Galway has announced plans to establish a [National Peatland Centre of Excellence at the University](#) to help tackle national and global challenges related to peatlands and associated decarbonisation, biodiversity loss, just transitions and culture.

Galway City Youth Climate Action Assembly

The third Galway City Youth Climate Assembly for secondary school students and youth groups took place in University of Galway on 14th November 2023, as part of the Galway Science and Technology Festival. The primary aim of the [Galway City Youth Climate Assembly](#) is to increase youth awareness of and participation in decision making in relation to climate action policies. All secondary schools in Galway City as well as Oranmore are participating. The Galway Youth Climate Assembly is a collaboration between University of Galway, Galway National Park City initiative, SAUTI-Youth project, the Atlantic Technology University (ATU), the Students' Union of the University of Galway and the Galway Science and Technology Festival. The Assembly included an exhibition space showcasing local projects and initiatives in the areas of climate, biodiversity and sustainability ranging from world class scientific research centres to grassroots projects. In parallel with the youth assembly Duncan Stewart, the renowned environmentalist and founder of Eco-Eye, hosted a separate morning event for secondary school teachers. Led by Galway National Park City, the fourth Galway City Youth Climate Action Assembly was hosted by ATU where secondary schools presented and exhibited on their sustainability, climate, and biodiversity themed projects. Transport was the main theme of the day and students heard from a range of speakers including sustainability themed transport initiatives by the University of Galway, Galway City Council and Gluas (a pun on 'Galway' and 'Luas'), an organisation advocating for a Very Light Rail sustainable public transport system in Galway City. Students were given the opportunity to offer their solutions to implement a safe pedestrian and cycling friendly city-wide transport infrastructure including an enhanced public transport network. The students subsequently presented [their findings](#) to local election candidates. The teenagers made recommendations on how to secure a more climate-friendly, sustainable, attractive, safer active transport infrastructure that they felt would also provide greater independence for young people in Galway.

New nationwide comedy show focuses on climate change

Scientists and theatre makers have joined forces to deliver a new interactive comedy show - We Built This City on Rock and Coal. Driven by hopepunk, climate research, music and matters relevant to the local community, the project aims to prompt discussion and change around environmental topics, while finding local positive steps towards solving climate change. The first performance of We Built This City on Rock and Coal took place at University of Galway in May 2024. Each live show includes sustainability workshops and citizen science activities, along with a space for audience members to speak up or be interviewed. Materials from the audience will then be used to improvise scenes, songs and sketches, making each of the shows unique. We Built This City on Rock and Coal is co-created and delivered by lecturers from University of Galway's School of Natural Sciences in conjunction with Katy Schutte, global improvisation practitioner and author and storyteller Orla McGovern, among others. Audience stories about climate change and climate action will be collected and shared online as part of the Caomhnú citizen science initiative.

SDG 14

Life Below Water



Photo Credit: Prof Chaosheng Zhang

A Snapshot of Progress

- Water-related modules and programmes
- Student-led beach clean-ups
- Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMRU)
- Developing tidal energy in the just transition
- A study of marine sediments in the Arctic providing insights into climate change's past and future impact
- AquaCop
- AquaDA
- University of Galway is a partner of the Waterland project
- Irish Ocean Literacy Network
- Coastal community policy recommendations to government



265 Publications

(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)

Students and Learning

Water-related modules and programmes

University of Galway offers a range of courses and programmes seeking to progress SDG 14. The programmes are part of the university's broader commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship. Prominent examples include our undergraduate courses in [Earth and Ocean Sciences](#) and [Marine Science](#). Students can develop specialist skills and knowledge through our postgraduate courses in [Coastal and Marine Environments](#), [Marine and Freshwater Resources: Management](#) and [Ocean, Atmosphere and Climate](#). Our [Applied Ecology Unit](#) and the Rayn institute also support student learning to progress SDG 14. For example, the Ryan Institute's Centre for Ocean Research & Exploration (COREx) conducts research to improve sustainability of both marine and coastal systems and are the leading university users in Ireland of research vessels such as the Celtic Explorer. Our [Applied Ecology Unit](#) carries out research on the EU protected habitat Machair (coastal grassland) as part of its [habitat protection research theme](#).

Student-led beach clean-ups

Student societies, such as the Marine Soc, and the SU arranged many different [beach clean-ups](#) throughout the year to raise awareness of our local coastal environment and to help keep our beaches clean and waste-free. These beach clean-ups took place at least twice a month on a Friday, and this consistency highlights the commitment by students to improving their local surroundings. Beach clean-ups directly contribute to reducing marine debris and protecting coastal ecosystems. They foster community involvement and help strengthen ties between the students and residents. By participating in clean-up activities students gain a sense of responsibility and civic pride and the clean-ups can motivate students to advocate for initiatives that promote environmental protection at local levels and beyond. Large student-led beach clean ups took place as part of University of Galway's SDG Week and [Wasted Week](#), for example.

A research team led by University of Galway spent several weeks at sea on board the Marine Institute's Celtic Explorer in the Labrador Sea between Canada and Greenland to measure climate change impact on oceans. Credit - Len Cowley

Research

Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMURU)

The main research focus of SEMURU is on the economic importance of coastal and off-shore marine environments. This involves examining the economic utility of the marine environment (e.g. transportation, recreation) and ecological value (e.g. fisheries, aquaculture) derived from the productivity of associated ecosystems. The coastal and contiguous marine environment surrounding Ireland and the EU in general provide the geographical focus for the research of the unit. Consideration of the human dimension in the management of marine ecosystems is also a critical component of all research projects within the unit. SEMURU is currently a partner on three EU projects and leads on several nationally funded projects.

One project that SEMRU is a partner on at present is the Marine Institute funded BlueC project. The overarching aim of BlueC is to advance the scientific understanding of the carbon (C) sequestering habitats in Irish coastal and marine environments, while simultaneously improving management and harnessing their potential for climate mitigation, adaptation and other ecosystem services to underpin policy development. Ocean and coastal marine systems play a significant role in the global carbon cycle, representing the largest long-term sink of C. Ireland has two blue carbon (BC) habitats: saltmarsh and seagrass meadows, and a vast marine territory containing potential BC systems, such as C-rich macroalgae, maërl, cold water corals, phytoplankton and sediments.

Specifically for Ireland, there is a paucity of data on the C storage capacity of these ecosystems, on the value of the ecosystem service benefits that they provide and a lack of coherent management strategies that hampers the ability to integrate these ecosystems into climate policy frameworks. SEMRU's role in the project is to estimate the ecosystem service benefit values associated with such habitats and how their restoration may be financed.

Developing tidal energy in the just transition

Tidal energy is emerging as a promising solution with unique advantages to generate affordable and clean energy. The TIDAL-GES project at the University of Galway is focusing on enabling tidal energy to become part of the solution to enabling a just transition to affordable and clean energy that also enhances the health and resilience of communities, wildlife, and the environment. The project will engage with multiple stakeholders – including the people living in the coastal communities – to unlock the potential benefits for them in our drive to decarbonise the economy. Part of the University of Galway Global Challenges Programme, the project will bring together a multi-disciplinary team of researchers from the school of engineering, the school of natural science and the school of business and economics to tackle challenges facing the widespread uptake of tidal energy. Successful completion of the project will de-risk tidal energy production by developing new engineering tools for the tidal industry, understanding the influence tidal devices have on their local environment and engaging with stakeholders to avoid conflict. This, in turn, will allow tidal energy to fulfil its potential as part of the transition to clean renewable energy.

A study of marine sediments in the Arctic providing insights into climate change's past and future impact

A faculty member from the School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies has undertaken a research expedition to the Arctic as part of the SiTrAc project focused on studying marine sediments to understand climate change's past and future impacts. Conducted aboard the RV Celtic Explorer this research focuses on the Arctic and Sub-Arctic seas, regions critical for understanding global climate dynamics due to their sensitivity to environmental changes. The team collect sediment cores from the ocean floor which contain layers of mineral deposited over millennia. By analysing these layers, they can reconstruct historical climate data including temperature fluctuations, ice cover and ocean circulation patterns. This information helps identify climate tipping points- thresholds beyond which significant and potentially irreversible changes occur. The findings from the SiTrAc project are vital for improving climate models and enhancing our understanding of how the Earth's climate system responds to natural and anthropogenic influences. By studying the past, the research provides a clearer picture of the future, contributing to global efforts to address the climate crisis and promote environmental resilience.





AquaCop

The overarching aim of the proposed AquaCop research project is to exploit Copernicus data to improve efficiency, accuracy and implementation of coastal water monitoring programmes. This will be achieved in a multiple-step process by assessing the accuracy of available CMEMS products and developing the location-specific optically active and inactive RS products to complement and optimize the existing monitoring programme, and ultimately by developing the coastal water quality index model for TraC waters (by using advanced artificial intelligence and machine learning techniques) to further support the monitoring programme and draw inference about water quality and trophic statuses. This project will bring forward the data collection into the 21st century and improve the capacity of monitoring programmes to take account of the highly complex spatial and temporal dynamics of TraC waters. The project will also generate a significant step forward in our understanding of nutrient cycling, feedbacks, water quality problems and environmental stressor/pressures on aquatic environment related to human activities including climate change. AquaCop will integrate optimized in-situ data with remotely sensed data streams to facilitate more accurate assessment of water quality and cost-effective management of WQ monitoring. The project will also propose the RS data-driven CWQI model that can support assessment of water quality in TraC waterbodies. Such comprehensive datasets will provide knowledge and evidence to be used for policy recommendations, water resource managements and to deliver risk management strategies and mitigation measures. As such the project outcomes will be of interest to TraC data users, ranging from scientists to water management professionals and the interested public. In overall, this research is driven by legislation and binding international agreements which require informed responses on key environmental issues, and is a vital component in delivering on wider environmental, economic and societal ambitions. This project is funded by the EPA.

AquaDA

Coastal ocean is a dynamic, complex region where offshore and nearshore processes interact and create physical and biogeochemical conditions suitable for rich ecosystems and blue-growth. In Irish coastal waters, hydrodynamic and biogeochemical dynamics of these systems are simulated and forecasted by the ROMS Marine Institute operational modelling system (MIOMS). This project aims to apply state-of-the-art tools and techniques in ocean observations and numerical algorithms for data assimilation and soft modelling to improve the forecasting skill of the MIOMS operation system. The new forecasting system will provide highly accurate marine state predictions to be used for decision-making in relation to management of marine ecosystem services and ensure a sustainable blue-growth in Irish marine waters.

Community Engagement

University of Galway is a partner of the WaterLANDS project

The [WaterLANDS project](#) is contributing to the restoration of wetland sites across Europe and is laying the foundations for enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems services while addressing climate change impacts. Launched in December 2021 the project spans six years and involves 32 partners from 14 countries, including University of Galway as a key partner. It focuses on large scale wetland restoration leveraging innovative techniques and community engagement to achieve sustainable outcomes. WaterLANDS priorities the rehabilitation of degraded wetlands recognising their crucial role in carbon sequestration, water purification and flood mitigation. A key feature of WaterLANDS is its emphasis on inclusive and participatory approaches ensuring local communities are integral to the restoration process. This collaborative framework seeks to align environmental goals with socio-economic benefits, promoting long term stewardship of restored wetlands. WaterLANDS is funded through the EU Horizon 2020 Green Deal Call 7.1.

Irish Ocean Literacy Network

University of Galway is a member of the [Irish Ocean Literacy Network \(IOLN\)](#), a network dedicated to enhancing public understanding and appreciation of Ireland's marine environment. The network brings together individuals organisations and institutions committed to promoting ocean literacy which encompasses awareness education and sustainable management of marine resources. The networks mission is to cultivate a society that recognises the importance of the ocean both for its ecological significance and its socio-economic benefits. University of Galway supports the networks objectives by engaging in research, offering educational resources and participating in public engagement activities. Our researchers collaborate with IOLN to develop and disseminate ocean literacy material, host workshops and organise events that raise awareness of marine issues.

Coastal community policy recommendations to government

A Geography lecturer based in the School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies worked in partnership with the Climate Change Advisory Council (CCAC) to identify new policy recommendations from volunteer coastal community groups. The EPA published a research report '[Building Coastal and Marine Resilience in Ireland](#)' in 2023, which highlights barriers and enablers coastal communities in Ireland face when trying to build resilience towards climate change. This study builds on the key lessons identified in this work that emphasise the importance of involving communities in the decision-making process through dialogue between communities and policy makers. This project facilitated this dialogue by delivering community informed policy recommendations in the context of building resilience in coastal areas in Ireland and will support the Just Transition principle of continued social dialogue. The project had two primary elements: a detailed survey completed by twenty-seven different coastal community groups around the country, and an in-person workshop with eleven of these groups. The project had a dedicated Geographic Information System (GIS) interactive mapping tool into which respondents could input the location and details of their activities. The project report was presented to the CCAC in May 2024 and accepted for publication in summer 2024.



SDG 15

Life on Land



A Snapshot of Progress



- Biodiversity, ecology and landscape programmes and modules
- Launch of new SDG Trail
- Just 3
- The Farming Rathcroghan Project
- Partnership agreement with the National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Coastal management of Derrynane National Historic Park, County Kerry
- University of Galway scores top marks in the Irish Business Against Litter survey
- Connecting Gaeltacht communities with their natural environment
- Celebrating 'Life on Land' during SDG week



University of Galway Environmental Society announced winners of the 'Best Green Initiative' for their Organic Garden, in the National Society Awards 2024



145 Publications

(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)



The University of Galway campus is an An Taisce Green Flag Award winning park in 2023. This Green Flag Award programme acknowledge Ireland best public parks and gardens. We are an An Taisce Green-Campus Ireland awarded site since 2019.



Ours is one of the most biodiverse campuses in Ireland. Celebrate nature on campus by walking our Biodiversity Trail



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHĒ
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY
Sustainability Report
2023-2024

Students and Learning

Programmes and courses

With topics related to biodiversity, conservation, and sustainable land management, the University is striving to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to contribute to the achievement of SDG 15 and fosters a commitment to sustainability and conservation in future professional and leaders. For example, courses in Environmental Science and Ecology provide students with a comprehensive understanding of terrestrial ecosystems biodiversity and the importance of preserving natural ecosystems. Specialised course in biodiversity and conservation explores strategies for conserving biodiversity and investigate the impact of human activities on ecosystems. Examples of courses include [Biodiversity and Land Use Planning](#); [Landscape, Archaeology and Heritage](#); [Sustainable Environments](#) and [Sustainable Resource Management](#).

In 2023, University of Galway launched a new micro-credential in [Honey Bee Health](#) that aims to provide beekeepers with the necessary skills and knowledge to be able to identify the criteria needed to raise healthy honeybees. Key to raising healthy honeybees is good animal husbandry and knowledge of pests and diseases of the honeybee. Being able to assess the risks associated with poor apiary hygiene, disease hot spots, overstocking and habitat loss, puts the beekeeper in control. A clear benefit of the micro-credential is increased productivity (under the right weather conditions) which is reflected in the amount of surplus honey available to the beekeeper should they choose to harvest it. At the end of the micro-credential, subject to numbers (approximately 25-30), learners will be invited to campus for a practical on the identification of disease with Dr. Mary Coffey, expert from DAFM (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine)

Launch of new SDG Trail

In September 2023, University of Galway launched a new [SDG trail](#) for the campus to showcase, share and promote our efforts at developing the campus as a living lab for best practice in embedding the SDGs. By walking the trail participants can learn about the 17 SDGs and gain insights into the scale and breadth of projects and initiatives taking place across the University that are progressing the SDGs. The SDG Trail demonstrates that action is needed at local, national, and international levels to achieve the SDGs. Stop-offs along the trail include, for example, Áras na Mac Léinn, home to the ALIVE programme, the University of Galway's flagship volunteering programme; the Geofit borehole, a new geothermal heat pump system that forms part of our climate action strategy; and the Irish Centre of Human Rights, Ireland's leading academic human rights institution.

Just 3

Just 3 is an initiative between University of Galway's International Office and Terryland Forest Park. International students coming to study at the university are invited to volunteer 'just 3' hours of their time to take part in conservation projects within Terryland Forest Park, Ireland's largest urban woodland. Every Saturday morning since September 2023, students have gathered at An Nead on Sandy Rd to take part in activities such as removal of invasive alien plant species, the planting of an edible forest and native Irish trees, acorn harvesting and park clean ups. Groups varying in size from 6 up to 60 students have gathered every week to help local Galway volunteers take care of the precious greenspace that is Terryland Forest Park. They have gotten to know each other and contribute the local community whilst also learning about the origins of Ireland's largest community-local government urban woodland. They have learnt how, since its inception in 2000, Terryland Forest Park has served as a 'carbon sink', a wildlife sanctuary, an ecological corridor, an Outdoor Classroom and an outdoor passive recreational facility. A core group of students volunteered every weekend throughout the academic year and as a result, have left Galway with a sense of connection to the city, it's people and it's environment.



Students volunteering in the 'Just 3' initiative during SDG Week 2023

Research

The Farming Rathcroghan Project

'Farming Rathcroghan', a European Innovation Partnership (EIP) project funded through the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine, was awarded €984,000 in 2018 for a five-year programme to devise and implement novel, environmentally sustainable farming innovations to protect and conserve the archaeological heritage of the Late Prehistoric royal landscape of Rathcroghan in Co. Roscommon. Its brief also addresses environmental concerns including the maintenance of ground-water quality, carbon sequestration, and other actions in support of government policy towards achieving a climate-neutral economy. This project, now concluding, is a joint initiative of the Rathcroghan Visitor Centre, the Discipline of Archaeology (University of Galway), Roscommon County Council, National Monuments Service, Rathcroghan landowners and other key farming and heritage stakeholders.

In April 2024, the Farming Rathcroghan Project was awarded a grant of €886,634 under the EU Just Transition Fund as part of two-year project. The objective of this fund is to enable regions and people to address the social, employment, economic and environmental impacts of the transition towards a climate-neutral economy.

Partnership agreement with the National Parks and Wildlife Service

University of Galway has signed a partnership agreement with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to enhance opportunities for research and learning in the Burren in Co. Clare. The partnership will support programmes for academic research and study, participation in events promoting nature conservation, research, and study in the Burren, and learning activities for students in local schools and University of Galway. The partnership underpins shared management and access to two facilities in the Burren region – the Carron Field Research Facility and the Finavarra Research Station, for education, research, and outreach. It is hoped that the partnership will promote a greater appreciation of the intrinsic value of our natural heritage and attract students from local schools, the University of Galway and further afield to explore their learning in nature conservation, ecology, geology, and archaeology.

Coastal management of Derrynane National Historic Park, County Kerry

A Geography lecturer based in the School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies, worked in partnership with the Office of Public Works to publish the 2023 report [Planning for change: coastal management and climate adaptation in Derrynane National Historic Park, Co. Kerry](#). The report details the results of a community participatory workshop that was co-facilitated by students in the MSC programme 'Coastal and Marine Environments' that assessed the perception of the participants to coastal and ocean management practices in their area and the potential impacts of climate change. A survey of the participants gauged their connection to the Derrynane coast and their perception of multiple facets of the coast including amenities available for visitors; human impacts on the coastal areas; habitats and the community; biodiversity and nature conservation site designations; and identifying future coastal management actions that could benefit the community. The report identifies obstacles experienced by participants to deliver community-led coastal management actions. Many workshop participants are eager to participate and contribute to community-led actions focused on building the long-term resilience of the Derrynane coast. To do this they would require greater guidance, knowledge and establishment of formal lines of communication to effectively work with the OPW in its capacity as the public body responsible for the conservation and management of Derrynane National Historic Park.

The [Molecular Parasitology Laboratory](#) is a multidisciplinary team of parasitologists, molecular biologists, biochemists and immunologists. Its research advances the development of sustainable and non-chemical means of parasite control that does not adversely affect our environment. As part of the [Centre for One Health](#), the lab holds a symposium each year with particular emphasis on SDG-related topics.

Community Engagement

University of Galway scores top marks in the Irish Business Against Litter survey

University of Galway achieved a Grade A for the standards of cleanliness and upkeep of the campus as part of the Irish Business Against Litter (IBAL) survey 2023. Carried out by An Taisce, the IBAL review takes place each year with spot checks across the country and towns and cities are ranked for their appearance, the presence of litter and the impression created for visitors and tourists. The IBAL report scored University of Galway's campus a Grade A, noting: 'A beautiful environment which was not just excellent regarding litter but lovingly tended and maintained. All aspects within the campus were in very good order e.g. picnic tables, bicycle parking, paving, planted areas etc. It was great to see the opportunity to recycle with recycling bins incorporated into regular litter bins. Clearly this is a very well-respected environment.' The Galway City Council, Director of Services, has written to the University to share the appreciation of the local authority for supporting the city to achieve an enhanced IBAL rating and positive publicity for the city as a location for business and leisure.

Our campus is one of the most biodiverse in Ireland. We have introduced new wildflower enhancement schemes, bird boxes, bat boxes, insect hotels, beehives, a pollinator friendly pesticide code and a log tree hive. Experience the most biodiverse campus in Ireland through sound with our [podcast](#).

Connecting Gaeltacht communities with their natural environment

The Conamara Gaeltacht is a region with a marvellous mosaic of habitats for flora and fauna – ó chladach go criathrach. However, the connection between Gaeltacht communities and their natural environment has weakened, leading to an inability to see, identify, or name species. Strengthening this connection is critical in preparing us to help a planet threatened by human-induced biodiversity loss and climate change.

Flóra Chois Fharráige is an Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge outreach initiative, based in Ionad an Acadaimh, Carna, which ties together three threatened but interconnected strands of the environment, the Irish language, and the Gaeltacht tradition (timpeallacht, teanga, traidisiúin). In raising awareness about the importance of biodiversity to the environment and to our society, it also seeks to shine a light on those forgotten links between the Irish-language community and the flora on which it still depends.

The Flóra Chois Fharráige website, which contains information on 450 species of flowering plants, ferns, lichens, and seaweeds, anchors the project and provides the building blocks which allow us to create exhibitions such as Gnáthóga Chois Fharráige, a series of 10 panels which underline the importance of habitats to biodiversity. These have been installed, in Autumn 2023, in Gaelscoileanna across the country. Another exhibition, Flóra na Gaeltachta, illustrates the region's biodiversity richness and is currently on show in Ionad an Phiarsaigh, Ros Muc.

Through exhibitions like these, as well as regular biodiversity walks, information events, publications, and public talks, we educate both our students and the wider public on the importance of biodiversity in our natural environment.

Celebrating 'Life on Land' during SDG week

Members of the Community University Sustainability Partnership hosted a seed collection and seed sowing event as part of SDG Week 2023, to raise awareness of biodiversity on campus. University of Galway students and staff along with industry partners collected from plants with ripe seeds and sowed them in the grounds of the new student accommodation area. There are biodiverse meadows on campus, some are classified as rare calcareous grasslands. The plan is to investigate the potential of creating new grasslands using plants nearby from the calcareous plots. Participants received a short talk and demonstration before being allocated to a team to collect seeds from specific calcareous grassland plants.



Photo Credit: Prof Chaosheng Zhang

University of Galway Biodiversity Trail
Photo Credit: Prof Chaosheng Zhang



SDG 16

Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions



The University of Galway hosted the second day of the Government's Consultative Forum on International Security Policy, in June 2023

A Snapshot of Progress

- Launch of new Sustainability Office
- Award Winning Module: Responsible Management & Leadership
- Students delve into the cutting edge of cyber-security
- The University of Galway Tax Clinic
- Republic of Conscience: Human Rights and Modern Irish Poetry
- Envisioning security for a more than human world
- Challenging fake news on migration
- Government's Consultative Forum on International Security Policy
- I gCroí na hEorpa: Literature of Witness
- Local Authority Finances website
- Tight Spaces – An exploration of the Direct Provision system



323 Publications
(Scopus Publications 2018-2022)



University of Galway School of Law is the winner of the Law School of the Year in the Irish Law Awards 2024.



University of Galway is a member of the Scholars at Risk Network; an international network of institutions and individuals whose mission it is to protect scholars and promote academic freedom.



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Students and Learning

Launch of new Sustainability Office

University of Galway has launched a new centralised sustainability office. The [Sustainability Office](#) comprises a Director of Sustainability, Sustainability Officer, Sustainability Accountant, Administrative Assistant and works closely with two Lecturers in Education for Sustainable Development based in CELT. The purpose of the Sustainability Office is to lead and promote sustainability in all aspects of university learning and research, culture, operations and governance structures, and to empower its diverse communities of staff, students and partners to co-create tomorrow's sustainable campus and deliver the SDGs. It is envisaged that the office will create platforms for students and staff to participate in governance and decision-making processes ensuring diverse voices are heard and considered in decision making processes. By leading the development of clear policies and procedures in sustainability and climate action related areas, it is envisaged that the office will offer transparency in university operations and hold the institution accountable for its sustainability goals. By integrating sustainability into its core function, the office will play a key role in promoting ethical behaviour and integrity setting the standard for responsible conduct and institutional practises.

The Sustainability Office ensures good governance for sustainability by implementing a structured and transparent reporting system. The Sustainability office led by the Director of Sustainability, reports to the Deputy President & Registrar. The Director of Sustainability reports bi-annually to the University Management Team and reports annually to the Údarás na hOllscoile (Governing Authority) Standing & Strategic Planning Committee.

Award Winning Module: Responsible Management & Leadership

Managing and leading responsibly is an integrative approach regarding the role of business in collaborating to achieve ethics, responsibility and sustainability (ERS) goals, while creating long-term sustainable business models. This Master in Sustainability Leadership and Executive Master of Business Administration module applies responsible management and leadership in practice, facilitating students to engage in changing organisational practices to make them more responsible, with a focus on transformative change. Using a balance of theory and practice, including application of central tools such as stakeholder management in addressing the SDGs students collaborate with regional organisations to analyse key sustainability challenges encountered by business leaders, and generate real-life solutions towards resolving these. This module recently received a UN Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) Innovative Pedagogy award.

Students delve into the cutting edge of cyber-security

University of Galway has teamed up with a global cybersecurity company called Centripetal to provides industry-informed insights and learning opportunities for students in the field of cybersecurity. It is hoped that the initiative will help equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to address today's cybersecurity challenges. The cybersecurity summer school saw 54 students go through a comprehensive week-long course focusing on the evolving landscape of cybersecurity threat, engaging with industry experts to explore risk levels and the application of AI in cybersecurity. The course is the culminating project of the [Masters in Cybersecurity Risk Management](#) at the University's J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics. This newly developed course equips students with practical skills and insights in the field of intelligence-powered cybersecurity. Professor Tom Action, Head of the Business Information Systems Discipline, J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics, University of Galway, said: "The summer school link-up with Centripetal is particularly advantageous to our students to have a global leader in cyber-threat expertise play an embedded and core role with our School in delivering a cutting-edge capstone summer school in cybersecurity as part of our MSc programme suite."

The University of Galway Tax Clinic

The University of Galway Tax Clinic, established in 2019 by Prof. Emer Mulligan, is a pioneering initiative in Ireland. It provides free tax services and fosters tax empowerment among the students in the university and marginalised citizens in the community. One to one consultations are conducted by tax students under the supervision of volunteer professional tax advisors. In AY 23-24, the clinic provided over 100 consultations for students and community clients. The clinic collaborates with local, regional, and national partners including COPE Galway, Longford Women's Link, and Focus Ireland, who provide homeless and domestic abuse services, providing flexible, tailored support for these groups. This outreach, as well as serving the immediate needs of individuals by helping them navigate tax issues, also contributes to long-term societal benefits by fostering tax-literacy and imparting vital life skills. The Tax Clinic is aligned with SDG 16, SDG 4, and SDG 10 by supporting the promotion of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions (SDG 16), providing quality education (SDG 4), and working to reduce inequalities (SDG 10). By integrating these goals, the clinic also offers a work integrated learning experience for the student tax advisors and prepares them as future professionals committed to social responsibility.

Research

Republic of Conscience: Human Rights and Modern Irish Poetry

A research project titled Republic of Conscience: Human Rights and Modern Irish Poetry, investigates at the role of poetry as a form of witness and as a form of redress in the context of international human rights violations. The soft power of literature is an intrinsic part of the formal human rights regime. Notably, this project also focuses on the need to reimagine human rights in the era of the Anthropocene. The concept of sustainability as understood in indigenous cultures is compared to and contrasted with the Western concept of sustainability that underpins the SDGs.

Envisioning security for a more than human world

A Professor of Human Geography at University of Galway was one of the writers of the UN Special Report, New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene in his capacity as International Consultant on Human Security in the UN's Human Development Report Office (HDRO). The report addressed all of the SDGs in unison in envisioning a holistic sense of human and environmental security. In 2023, the Professor was nominated by the Royal Irish Academy as a member of the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP) working group on human security. The IAP working group submitted a collective Statement on Human Security to the UN General Assembly in February 2024. In January 2024, the UN Development Programme published a [policy envisioning paper](#) authored by the Professor addressing the polycrisis the globe is facing in terms of planetary boundary pressures, the ecological excesses of late modern capitalism, and the requirement for a more regulated and accountable global governance, towards a more sustainable custodianship of the planet.

Challenging fake news on migration

The head of the discipline of Journalism and Communication at University of Galway led the development of a global media literacy programme, the Global Media Migration Academy (GMMA), to respond to the growing threats posed by disinformation targeting refugees and migrants. The project ran from April 2021 to October 2023. The project was co-funded by the UN migration agency, IOM, and the Department of Foreign Affairs' development wing, Irish Aid. The GMMA aims to reshape how migration stories are told and understood worldwide. It includes the development of a series of educational resources and training to better equip the media and the public to understand the complex area of migration, as well as digital literacy training to be vigilant of disinformation. Since its inception, the GMMA has made significant strides in transforming how migration stories are crafted and disseminated. University of Galway hosted the first Global Migration Summer School, involving more than 50 journalists and journalism students, policymakers, diplomats, and UN officials from a range of countries. A documentary filmed in the University of Galway's television studios was broadcast internationally, reaching a broad audience and sparking constructive dialogue on migration policies. Feedback from alumni and stakeholders has been overwhelmingly positive, with many noting how GMMA has transformed their approach to journalism and advocacy. A module on migration and media for students, focusing on the impact of media narratives on migration issues has now been developed. This module explores how media representations influence public perceptions of migration, the experiences of migrants, and policymaking. It also examines the role of media in shaping narratives of inclusion and exclusion, and how these narratives can impact social cohesion and integration..



University of Galway listed as a *Top Performer for Coordination and Planning* in the [2023 Sustainable Campus Index](#). Coordination and Planning provides the infrastructure to foster sustainability, establish priorities, guide decision making and budgeting, and clarify a vision for a sustainable future.

Community Engagement

Government's Consultative Forum on International Security Policy

The University of Galway hosted the second day of the Government's Consultative Forum on International Security Policy, in June 2023. The Forum aims to improve public understanding on Ireland's foreign, security and defence policies. The forum was open to members of the public and provided civilian, military experts and practitioners the opportunity to discuss issues including Ireland's efforts to protect the rules-based international order through peacekeeping and crisis management, international humanitarian law, and conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

I gCroí na hEorpa: Literature of Witness

I gCroí na hEorpa: Literature of Witness, was conceptualized, planned, and moderated by a professor based in Roinn na Gaeilge, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe, in partnership with Dingle Literary Festival. A public interview was held with Zlata Filipović, an award-winning writer who escaped Sarajevo during the Bosnian War and was granted asylum with her family in Ireland. Her childhood diary, *Zlata's Diary*, became an international bestseller. During this interview, aspects of international human rights law were discussed as well as activism by Irish writers, particularly Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, who sought to hold the Irish Government to account for their inadequate response to ethnic cleansing during the Bosnian War. Irish-language poet, Dairena Ní Chinnéide, discussed the role of literary translation as a form of human rights activism. The role of writers in informing public opinion and disseminating ideas about shared ideals of justice, peace and functioning institutions was discussed as intrinsic to the formal human rights system, which would not function without public support and buy-in.

Local Authority Finances website

Developed and managed by academics from the discipline of Economics, University of Galway, the Local Authority Finances website aims to improve the transparency of local public finances (SDG 16.10). The website allows users to view the income and expenditure of each of the 31 local authorities in Ireland, broken down by four types of income and seven types of spending. The data is presented in text, pie charts and bar charts. Users can compare their selected local authority to the national average or compare the spending of up to five councils. The data is updated annually. The website also contains blog posts about topics that include local property taxes, equalisation grants for weaker councils, changes to the functions and powers of councils, etc. In terms of stakeholder engagement, the authors have engaged in conversations directly with elected members and managers of local authorities, about issues and reforms to local public finances. An analysis of the budget data is also published in *Local Authority Times*. Regarding outreach, and contributing to the public good, the budget data has been published in various publicly accessible articles by the national broadcaster to help bring understandable, accurate, up-to-date information in accessible formats to the public.

Tight Spaces – An exploration of the Direct Provision system

'*Tight Spaces*' is an engaging and interactive workshop focused on a youth-led resource; this educational resource was created by young people for young people. The workshop is led by a group of young people (affiliated with ARD Family Resource Centre) who were involved in its development, and, through the workshop, they share their own personal experiences of seeking safety and belonging. As such, 'Tight Spaces' gives insight into the treacherous journeys people have had to take in search of safety and their experiences within Ireland's international protection system. It aims to raise awareness of Ireland's Direct Provision system and intends to bridge the gap in knowledge for young people in Ireland on this topic. As part of Nelson Mandela Week 2024 (March 19-22) the project was reimaged to include the learning experienced by student teachers on the Professional Master of Education (PME) programme, School of Education, University of Galway, who previously participated in the workshop. As such, the workshop was facilitated by those young people who created it with additional input from ARD Family Resource Centre staff plus student teachers and staff on the PME programme. Attendees included students and staff from Galway city secondary schools and the public.



President of University of Galway Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh; Professor Emer Mulligan, Director of the clinic and Personal Professor in Taxation and Finance at University of Galway; Government Chief Whip and Minister of State Hildegard Naughton T.D.; Dr Maggie O'Neill, Tax Clinic Coordinator. Photo Credit : Andrew Downes/Xposure



Photo Credit: Prof Chaosheng Zhang

SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



Ni neart go cur le chéile
There is no strength without unity

A Snapshot of Progress



- University of Galway designated as a national SDG Champion
- University of Galway hosts SDG Champions on campus
- Inaugural SDG Week and partnership with European SDG week
- Launch of new SDG Trail
- Collaborative SDG Mapping project J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economic
- Student Sustainability Leadership Awards 2024
- Awards, Recognition and Achievements



NO. 1

Named the number one university in Ireland for sustainable development for the third year in a row.



Secured the top prize for excellence in sustainability at The Irish Education Awards Excellence in Sustainability category.



Named national Sustainable Development Goal Champion 23-24, the first university in Ireland to hold this honour.



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University of Galway designated as a national SDG Champion

In May 2023, University of Galway was designated as a national [SDG Champion for 2023-24](#) by Minister for the Environment, Climate, Communications and Transport Eamon Ryan T.D. We are the first University to hold this honour and the designation recognises the leading role the University is playing in achieving SDGs. The role of an SDG Champion is to raise public awareness of the SDGs and act as a good practice example of how an organisation can contribute to and integrate the SDGs into their work and activities. We use the designation to highlight the role that the SDGs play in our teaching, research, operations, and engagement. From hosting our first SDG week; to developing and launching an SDG Trail through the campus; publishing SDG quarterly reports and launching a new SDG focused podcast series - the designation is a great opportunity to showcase, share and promote our efforts at developing the campus as a living lab for best practice in embedding the SDGs.

University of Galway hosts SDG Champions on campus

University of Galway [hosted the Government of Ireland National SDG Champions](#) on campus for a collaborative, interactive meeting, on the themes of Climate Action (SDG 13) and Partnerships (SDG17). The day's events included flash presentations on a range of University of Galway climate projects, including Peatlands and People; student led sustainability initiatives; Galway National Park City; and Partnership with the Mary Robinson Centre. Other highlights included a guided walk along the University of Galway Biodiversity and SDG Trails; an outline of the Geofit project; a workshop on Climate Engagement led by IPSOS Ireland; an introduction to SDG Geohive by Táihte Eireann and presentations by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications; and the University of Galway's Sustainability Office. The meeting was a great opportunity for SDG Champions to work together, share knowledge and learn from best practice examples of activities and partnerships taking place across the country, to achieve Agenda 2030. The event took place in IdeasLab, University of Galway's student Innovation hub. Catering on the day was provided by Saol Café, a social inclusion café on the University of Galway campus.

Inaugural SDG Week and partnership with European SDG week

In September 2023, University of Galway hosted its first SDG week to increase awareness, engagement, and action to help achieve the SDGs. SDG Week was organised on the back of the Government of Ireland designating University of Galway as a national SDG Champion. SDG Week formed part of the wider European Sustainable Development Week, which this year ran from September 18 to 23. Over 25 events took place throughout the week, including 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. SDG week was developed to raise awareness of the SDGs and share our learnings and experiences with others so we can all make a difference by integrating them into our work and daily activities. SDG week was open to all including students' staff and community partners. We have now partnered with European Sustainable Development Week and plan to host an SDG week on annual basis.

Launch of new SDG Trail

In September 2023, University of Galway launched a new SDG trail for the campus to showcase, share and promote our efforts at developing the campus as a living lab for best practice in embedding the SDGs. By walking the trail participants can learn about the 17 SDGs and gain insights into the scale and breadth of projects and initiatives taking place across the University that are progressing the SDGs. The SDG Trail demonstrates that action is needed at local, national, and international levels to achieve the SDGs. Stop-offs along the trail include, for example, Áras na Mac Léinn, home to the ALIVE programme, the University of Galway's flagship volunteering programme; the Geofit borehole, a new geothermal heat pump system that forms part of our climate action strategy; and the Irish Centre of Human Rights, Ireland's leading academic human rights institution.

Collaborative SDG Mapping project J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economic

The J.E. Cairnes School of Business & Economics SDGs integration mapping project uses existing and new processes to explore how faculty in the School integrate the SDGs in their teaching, engagement activities and research. Developing almost eighty staff profiles using both qualitative and quantitative methods to map over 140 course modules and almost 700 publications to the SDGs. The project enabled faculty to elucidate where their work is supporting the SDGs to Target level, directly or indirectly mapped to all 17 goals and over 140 of the 169 Targets.

The data is displayed visually in an SDG wheel enabling users to drill down to lists of faculties working in each Goal and Target area and by keyword. The educational and reflective nature of the project enables faculty to explore how their work aligns with the SDG Targets. At the individual level the output of the assessment process displays the direct or indirect impact of their work and can feed into future planning of teaching, research and grant writing. At the programme or discipline level it contributes an overview of topics covered and helps to visualise their unique SDG impact. Analysis of keyword data helps to identify crosscutting themes in the work of faculty for example Ethics in Whistleblowing, AI and responsible use of technology, in Decent Work, in Governance, in the Environment, the Marine and in Healthcare.

Student Sustainability Leadership Awards 2024

To advance SDG-related projects, the University of Galway [launched the Student Sustainability Leadership Awards programme 2024](#). The programme is a partnership between CUSP and University of Galway students and staff. The Awards programme was advertised extensively across student platforms. An unprecedented number of very high calibre applications were received. Shortlisted applicants were invited to attend a short interview. Internships were [awarded](#) two University of Galway students; Molly Hickey is a second year BA with human rights student and the Students' Union Environmental Awareness and Sustainability Officer. Peter O'Neill is a first-year history student that represented Ireland at the 13th UNESCO Youth Forum. Molly and Peter will each receive a €4,000 prize and will participate in an 8-week internship with the Sustainability Office this summer. Through the programme we recognise the leading role that students play in the transition to a sustainable future and aim to support student leaders that are dedicated and enthusiastic about developing a more sustainable campus and community.

Awards, Recognition and Achievements

University of Galway has been named the [number one university in Ireland](#) for sustainable development for the third year in a row. The accolade has been awarded by Times Higher Education Impact rankings in recognition of the University's progress in responding to the SDGs. The rankings also places University of Galway in the world's top 50 and recognised globally for significant contribution to progress on 11 of the 17 UN SDGs. This includes a world ranking of number 10 for Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) and top 100 status for 6 of the 17 SDGs.

University of Galway is a member of the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) and received a STARS gold rating for its sustainability achievements. The rating was achieved following a review by (AASHE) under its [STARS rating system](#). University of Galway is listed as a top performer in the [AASHE 2023 Sustainable Campus Index](#).

University of Galway is an [An Taisce Green Camps Ireland awarded site](#). The green campus award is the result of many years of hard work undertaken to promote best practice in sustainability across five themes, which include energy, water, waste, transport, and biodiversity.

University of Galway is a signatory to the [SDG Accord](#) and several of its sustainability [case studies](#) feature on the SDG Accord Case Studies platform. The University's approach for progressing the SDGs is featured as a case study in Ireland's National Implementation Plan for the [Sustainable Development Goals 2022-2024](#). University of Galway is an [active member](#) of UN Academic Impact and is designated by the Conference of Parties as an [observer organisation](#) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process.

University of Galway secured the top prize for excellence in sustainability at The Irish Education Awards [Excellence in Sustainability](#) category. This award recognises the Irish-based third level institution, technical training college or organisation that can best demonstrate an initiative or project which shows a commitment to sustainability. On receipt of the award, Professor Pól Ó Dochartaigh, Deputy President and Registrar said: "All of us who are involved in progressing sustainability at University of Galway can rightly take ownership of our success at the Education Awards – it is a team effort, and it is a community effort, and I am delighted to see recognition for us all."

University of Galway students host an Environmental Summit as part of SDG Week 2023







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