

2025 -
2026

ANNUAL REPORT



IRISH
HUMANITIES
ALLIANCE

CONTENTS

02	About
03	IHA year in numbers
04	Forewords
04	Professor Brendan Dooley, Chair
05	Professor Sonja Tiernan, Coordinator
06	Board members
09	Incoming board changes 2026-27
10	Institutional members
11	Public engagement
11	Workshops
12	Irish Scottish Cultural Relations & Diplomacy
13	Annual IHA conference 2025
14	Professional training
14	Information sessions
14	Partnerships
15	Working Groups
15	Environmental Humanities
15	Horizon Europe
15	Legal Humanities
16	Medical and Health Humanities
16	Research Ethics & AI
16	Research and Innovation
17	Publications
17	Statements
18	Reports
19	Website and social media
19	Connect with us
20	Looking ahead to 2026-27
20	IHA Annual Conference 2026
21	IHA AGM
21	Call for proposals to host conference 2027
21	Key priorities 2026-27
21	Membership expansion
21	Impact case studies
21	AI & humanities
21	Funding
22	Internal governance

About the Irish Humanities Alliance

The Irish Humanities Alliance (IHA) is a joint initiative of humanities researchers within higher education and research institutions across the island of Ireland, founded in 2013 and housed at the Royal Irish Academy (RIA). The IHA provides a platform for all-island humanities collaboration and consultation which has enabled the diverse range of humanities disciplines across the island to speak with a single voice.

Core Objectives

- Protect, promote and develop humanities scholarship across the island of Ireland.
- Promote humanities collaborations between institutions and disciplines.
- Ensure parity of esteem between humanities disciplines.
- Promote secure and adequate funding of humanities research in Ireland.
- Promote the centrality of the humanities in addressing pressing societal challenges.
- Support excellence at all stages of academic career development in the humanities.
- Advocate for research strategies attuned to a multicultural and multilingual society.
- Promote European and further international humanities collaboration with humanities organisations and alliances.

Governance

The IHA is run by a governing board of its institutional members. The board are responsible for general government and strategic direction of the IHA including approval of the annual work programme. The board is led by an Executive Committee comprising the IHA Chair, Vice-Chair and Coordinator. The Executive Committee address day to day operations of the IHA and meet a minimum of once per month. The IHA Coordinator is responsible for the overarching coordination of the IHA, delivery of the annual work programme and represents the IHA in all acts of ordinary business, subject to the oversight and approval of the IHA Chair. A Memorandum of Understanding is in place between the RIA and the IHA which acts as an agreed framework to clarify the relationship and responsibilities between the two entities.

Financial Management

The IHA is funded from annual member subscription fees and has control over setting its own budget. As the legal body with responsibility for the IHA, the RIA has overall responsibility for the proper control, management and administration of the funds allocated to IHA. The IHA coordinator is an employee of the RIA and ensures that all the activities of the IHA comply with RIA policies and procedures. The IHA coordinator provides an annual report to the RIA Council, outlining key objectives and agreed work programme.

Risk Management

The RIA engages directly with the IHA coordinator to ensure an informed and structured approach to risk and control is applied. The coordinator ensures that risks are identified and monitored, and appropriate controls are in place. The IHA Risk Register is reported quarterly to IHA Board and feeds into the RIA overall Risk Register within the overall structures of the RIA Risk Management and Auditing Structures.

IHA year in numbers



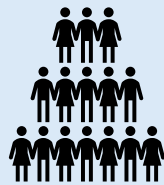
13

Years advocating for Arts and Humanities
across the island of Ireland



14

Institutional alliance members



4k

Followers across social media channels



340

Bookings for IHA events



14k

Active users www.irishhumanities.ie
(Sep 2025 – Aug 2026)



6

IHA organised events

Chair's Foreword

A chairde,

As chair of the Irish Humanities Alliance, it gives me great pleasure to introduce the annual report for 2025-2026.

Our communities thrive on the creativity and research of arts and humanities specialists in our member institutions as well as in society at large. Food, health, the environment, communication, knowledge production, international relations, gender dynamics, all these essential areas and more are touched by the humanities, as our many workshops and conferences have demonstrated; and the historians in our midst remind us that there is no future without awareness about the past. We are committed to ensuring that the humanities perspective receives the attention it deserves.



We are entering a crucial period, calling for wider applications of our expertise. Humanities disciplines study what makes us human; and with Artificial Intelligence increasingly applied to life's real problems and circumstances, understanding our humanity becomes particularly important. For these reasons we are committed to following and examining the application of the new knowledge technology in the many areas where it is being implemented, while at the same time paying due attention to public awareness of the new developments and their significance.

The IHA has been busy over the last months, as the research and innovation structures we rely on change and evolve. Funding for graduate students has never been more crucial, as costs rise and competition increases for enrolling the best students. Our ongoing participation in the development of Research Ireland, the new public funding organisation, will provide access to the ways and means for ensuring adequate support going forward, for project-based as well as blue-sky research. We are also contributing to discussions regarding the emerging European funding landscape, with a view to securing adequate space for humanities research in the upcoming Framework Program.

In navigating these challenging times, we rely on the collaboration of our members, and once again we thank them for their support!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brendan Dooley".

Prof Brendan Dooley

Coordinator's Foreword

A chairde,

It is a pleasure to present the IHA annual report for the academic year 2025-26. Previously IHA annual reports detailed activities for each calendar year and were published in January. This report marks a change to our process. From this point, the report will be launched at the IHA Annual General Meeting each September and will form the basis for discussions reflecting on past successes and in planning future directions.



During this academic year many positive advances were made. We enter the 2026-27 academic year with a restructured board, comprising one nominated representative from each of our member institutions. Aligned with best governance structure, our board composition allows for a focused concentration on strategic vision, performance and risk management.

A new IHA website, launched in September 2025, is reaching wider audiences recording over 14,000 active users. A focus for the year ahead is to increase the number of [Impact Case Studies](#) showcased on our website. Case Studies provide a platform for arts and humanities scholars to highlight their research impact as well as highlighting national and international collaborations. I encourage colleagues based at our member institutions to contact me to discuss including their funded research projects on the IHA website.

The further development of [IHA Working Groups](#) has been particularly significant over this last year. Interdisciplinary WGs regularly host professional training workshops which are attracting a broad range of highly motivated scholars. This activity has witnessed an expansion of WG members and the production of pertinent reports and statements. The dedicated WG section of the IHA website records the highest user activity across our web pages.

To further strengthen our alliance and to ensure full representation of arts and humanities across our island, we continue to broaden our membership base. The IHA plan on further expansion into 2026-27 and welcome discussions with interested HEIs.

Finally, I would like to offer my thanks to our outgoing Chair, Prof Brendan Dooley, for his commitment to ensuring the success of the IHA, especially during his tenure on the executive. It has been a pleasure to work with Brendan whose enthusiasm and generosity is much appreciated.

I look forward to working with our incoming Chair, Prof Yvon Bonenfant (Director, Future Humanities Institute, UCC) and incoming Vice Chair, Dr Conor Trainor (Director of Graduate Studies, UCD) as we continue to champion all-island humanities collaboration, consultation and promotion.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Sonja Tiernan'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Prof Sonja Tiernan

Board members 2025-26

IHA Member Institutions propose one representative to sit on the IHA Board. Board members attend quarterly meetings, contribute to the IHA Work Programme, regularly inform their Member Institutions regarding the work of the IHA, and promote the work of the IHA within their institutions. The Board nominates a new Vice Chair each year, and the Vice Chair takes position as Chair the following year.

Prof Brendan Dooley, Chair 2025-26



Brendan Dooley (PhD Chicago 1986), Professor of Renaissance studies at University College Cork and current Chair of the IHA, works on the histories of culture and knowledge with reference to Europe and especially Italy and the Mediterranean world. Publications include *Angelica's Book and the World of Reading in Late Renaissance Italy* (Bloomsbury, 2016), *A Mattress Maker's Daughter, the Renaissance Romance of Don Giovanni de' Medici and Livia Vernazza* (Harvard, 2014), *The Social History of Skepticism* (Johns Hopkins, 1999), *The Continuing Exercise of Reason: Public Addresses by George Boole* (MIT Press, 2018), and, as author/ editor, *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Culture* (Ashgate, 2010).

Prof Anna Hickey-Moody, Vice Chair IHA, 2025-26



Anna Hickey-Moody, Director of the Arts and Humanities Research Institute and SALI Professor of Intersectional Humanities at Maynooth University. An interdisciplinary scholar working at the intersections of philosophy, gender and cultural studies, her research explores affect, aesthetics, and the politics of belonging, with a particular focus on youth, religion, disability, sex and environmental justice. Professor Hickey-Moody is the author and editor of numerous influential books, including *Faith Stories: Sustaining Difference in Troubling Times* (MUP, 2023). As Director of the Arts and Humanities Research Institute at Maynooth, Professor Hickey-Moody leads cross-disciplinary initiatives that foreground the role of arts and humanities scholarship in addressing pressing global challenges.

Dr Mark McCarthy, ATU



Dr Mark McCarthy is Senior Lecturer and Programme Chair in Heritage at Atlantic Technological University (ATU). His publications include *Ireland's 1916 Rising: Explorations of History-Making, Commemoration & Heritage in Modern Times* (Ashgate, 2012; Repr. Routledge, 2016) and an edited volume (with Bernard O'Hara) entitled *Technological Higher Education in the West of Ireland since 1972: Perspectives on the History & Memory of RTC Galway, GMIT, & ATU Galway-Mayo* (Atlantic Technological University, 2025). Mark was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1999 and Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 2013. He was awarded the GMIT President's Award for Teaching Excellence in 2016 and a Senior Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy in 2023.

Dr Ellen Howley, DCU



Dr Ellen Howley is an Assistant Professor at the School of English in DCU. Her monograph, *Oceanic Connections: The Sea in Irish and Caribbean Poetry* was published by Syracuse University Press in 2025. She was the co-PI on a Research Ireland-funded Science Week 2025 Project that took an Arts-based approach to Climate Change. Her research has appeared in *Irish Studies Review*, the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* and *Comparative Literature* and she has written for the *Irish Times*, *RTE Brainstorm*, and *The Conversation*.

Dr Rebecca Breen, MIC



Dr Rebecca Breen is Coordinator of Doctoral Programmes, Research & Graduate School at MIC. Her research focuses on the intersections between conceptualist art practice by women artists and *testimonio* – testimonial narrative literature from twentieth-century Latin America. Prior to joining the MIC, Dr Breen held a permanent lectureship in the University of Essex's School of Philosophy & Art History and was Associate Director of Essex's Centre for Curatorial Studies. She has taught Humanities subjects in the University of Cambridge and the University of Limerick.

Dr Simon Egan, QUB



Dr Simon Egan is a Lecturer in Medieval Irish History at Queen's University Belfast. His research focuses on the history and culture of pre-modern Ireland and Scotland with a special focus on Gaelic lordship and warfare, c.1100-c.1600. Simon previously worked as an Assistant Professor in Medieval Irish and British History at Trinity College Dublin and held a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellowship at the University of Glasgow. He completed a PhD in History at University College Cork in 2016, having previously graduated from the same institution with a BA in History & Modern Irish in 2011.

Prof Daniel Carey, RIA



Daniel Carey is a graduate of McGill University, Trinity College Dublin, and Oxford University. He has published a monograph on *Locke, Shaftesbury, and Hutcheson: Contesting Diversity in the Enlightenment and Beyond* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), and six edited volumes. He has published in a range of interdisciplinary journals on literature, the history of philosophy, history of science, anthropology, and travel. His teaching interests include Renaissance literature, Shakespeare, Renaissance drama, the eighteenth century, and Romanticism. He was elected to the Royal Irish Academy in 2014 and was chair of the Irish Research Council (2022-24) and Chair of the IHA (2014-16). He is President of the Royal Irish Academy.

Dr Suzanne Denieffe, SETU



Dr Suzanne Denieffe is Head of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in SETU. She holds a PhD from RCSI and an MSc and BSc from UCD. She is an active researcher, focusing on research to improve quality of life for vulnerable and marginalized groups, taking an interdisciplinary lens to address issues. She has led on several national research projects, and is currently chairing an EU COST Action project, CA 21123. She sits on several national committees as TUA representative and on university committees in her role as Head of Faculty, including chairing the University Art Committee.

Dr Conor McGarrigle, TUD



Conor McGarrigle is an artist and researcher working primarily with digital media. He holds a BSc from UCD, an MFA from NCAD and a PhD from DIT. A pioneer of digital art in Ireland his research-based practice has examined the entanglements of pervasive networked devices and computational processes in everyday life working with net art, locative media, augmented reality, and machine learning. He has exhibited internationally including the Venice Biennale, the St. Etienne Biennale, Fundació Miro, SIGGRAPH, Site Santa Fe, FILE São Paulo, EVA International, and Science Gallery Dublin and Detroit, and the Green on Red Gallery Dublin. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the Routledge journal Public Art Dialogue.

Prof Patrick Geoghegan, TCD



Patrick Geoghegan is Director of Trinity Long Room Hub and a leading scholar of eighteenth and nineteenth century Ireland. His work on the Irish Act of Union and its aftermath, the rebellion of Robert Emmet, and the political and legal career of Daniel O'Connell, culminating in five monographs, has been recognised both nationally and internationally. Geoghegan's engagement in public outreach has also been a distinctive feature of his work. The presenter of the award-winning *Talking History* on Newstalk radio, he has brought the discipline of history to a wide popular audience, and its weekly podcasts are among the most downloaded in the country. A Vice-President of the Irish Legal History Society, he has supported an interdisciplinary approach to legal and historical studies.

Dr Conor Trainor, UCD



Dr Conor Trainor is a Classicist specialising in the material culture of the Hellenistic and Roman Mediterranean. A Belfast native, he earned his BA (Hons) and MA from (the other) Queen's University, in Kingston, Ontario in Canada. Conor completed his PhD at Trinity College Dublin in 2013, producing a major study of ceramics from the ancient Greek city of Sikyon in 2015. An active field archaeologist since 2000, he has worked extensively in Greece and Canada and now focuses on the long-term urban development of ancient historical cities, particularly the site of Knossos on Crete. Conor has taught at institutions in the UK, Canada, Ireland, and Greece. He joined UCD Classics from the University of Warwick in 2024 as an Ad Astra Fellow.

Dr Nessa Cronin, UG



Nessa Cronin is Head of Irish Studies at the Centre for Irish Studies, University of Galway. She was Chair of the IHA (2024-25). Nessa has published widely on aspects of Irish Literature, Cultural Geography and Environmental Humanities. In September 2019 she was elected to the National Committee of Future Earth Ireland, and in December 2023 she was awarded a GATES MaCI Senior Research Fellowship and residency at the University of Grenoble-Alpes (June 2024) and St Cross College, University of Oxford (November 2024), for her work in Environmental Humanities in a European context.

Nessa was awarded the College of Arts Teaching Award in 2024, and a Dean of Arts Award for Doctoral Supervision at the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies in January 2020.

Prof Christina Morin, UL



Christina Morin is Professor in English and Assistant Dean of Research in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Limerick. Her publications include *Irish Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion* (2023; co-edited with Jarlath Killeen), *The Gothic Novel in Ireland, c. 1760-1829* (2018), *Traveling Irishness in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2017; co-edited with Marguërite Corporaal), *Irish Gothics: Genres, Forms, Modes, and Traditions* (2014; co-edited with Niall Gillespie), and *Charles Robert Maturin and the Haunting of Irish Romantic Fiction* (2011). She is the chair of the International Association for the Study of Irish

Literatures (IASIL), literature editor of the journal *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, and founding co-editor of Bloomsbury's Global Perspectives in Irish Literary Studies series.

Prof Karen Fleming, UU



Karen Fleming is the Ulster Director, Northern Bridge PhD Consortium. She began lecturing part-time while continuing as a freelance artist before assuming full-time responsibilities at Belfast School of Art, underpinning professional development to teach by completing a Master of Education (1995, distinction). She was appointed professor (2008) and continues to practice, exhibit and curate. Having been external examiner of fashion, textile and craft programmes in UK and Ireland, she is motivated to develop courses that anticipate future creative careers. She currently contributes

mainly to the MSc Fashion and Textiles Retail Management, with a focus on design thinking, product development, new fashion and textile models of consumption, ethical engagement with communities and supporting our graduates to contribute to a more sustainable future.

Incoming board changes 2026-27

Prof Yvon Bonenfant, IHA Chair 2026-27, UCC.

Dr Conor Trainor, IHA Vice Chair 2026-27, UCD.

Prof John O'Flynn, IHA board member, DCU.

Prof Victor Lazzarini, IHA board member, MU.

Prof David Fleming, IHA board member, UL.

Institutional members

The IHA is an alliance of fourteen members including higher education and research institutions who have invested significantly in the IHA since its establishment.



Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Atlantaigh

Atlantic
Technological
University



MIC
MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
COLÁISTE MHUIRE GAN SMÁL



**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann
Royal Irish Academy



**SE
TU**
Ollscoil
Teicneolaíochta
an Oirdheisirt
South East
Technological
University

**T
DUBLIN**
OLLSCOIL TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA
BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
TECHNOLOGICAL
UNIVERSITY DUBLIN



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



UCC
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh, Éire
University College Cork, Ireland



OLLSCOIL NA
GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY
OF GALWAY



**Ulster
University**



**UNIVERSITY OF
LIMERICK**
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

Public Engagement



Prof Brendan Dooley chairing discussion at IHA professional training workshop, RIA

The IHA provides a platform for all-island humanities collaboration and consultation. Through public events and professional training programmes the IHA advocates for research and education strategies attuned to a multilingual and multicultural society. During 2025-26 the IHA organised six public outreach and engagement events.

Law and Humanities Roundtable 2026

The IHA Legal Humanities Working Group (LHWG) co-organised the annual Law and Humanities Roundtable with the journal *Law and Humanities* and Dr Róisín Costello of Trinity College Dublin (TCD), who hosted the event. Organised in partnership with TCD's Jean Monnet DEMCONEX Centre and partly funded by the European Union. The event titled 'Visions of Democracy in Art and Literature', took place on 19 June 2026 attracting scholars from across Europe.

Among many speakers, several members of the LHWG spoke about their research: Dr Danny Shanahan addressed parallels between representations of law in Irish and Kashmiri literature; Prof David Kenny discussed the works of Jonathan Swift; Dr Sophie Doherty addressed the role of street art in promoting menstrual justice in Belfast. The event cemented links with *Law and Humanities*, a leading journal in the field. [Complete programme](#) available to consult.



Some of the participants at the event. Photograph courtesy of Dr Róisín Costello

Legal-Literary Imaginaries across the Ireland–India Nexus

On 25 March 2026 the LHWG cohosted, along with DCU's Ireland-India Institute, an online workshop titled 'Legal-Literary Imaginaries across the Ireland–India Nexus'. The event brought together scholars – based in Ireland, Germany, India, and the US – who work at the intersection of the legal and literary imaginations with interests in the connections between the legal and cultural histories of Ireland and India. The event was co-convened by the Working Group's Co-Chair, Prof Eugene McNulty, and the keynote address was delivered by Dr Danny Shanahan. The day was a productive one in terms of furthering the WG's international network – and further follow-up through publication is currently being explored. [Complete programme](#) available to consult.

Irish Scottish Cultural Relations & Diplomacy

A half-day event co-organised by the IHA, the Scottish Arts and Humanities Alliance (SAHA) and the Royal Irish Academy (RIA). Held at the RIA on 26 September 2025, exploring the progress achieved in implementing the recommendations of the first Joint Bilateral Review of the Irish and Scottish Governments.



Prof Murray Pittock, co-chair SAHA

Introductory remarks made by Prof Murray Pittock, SAHA Co-Chair & Prof Sonja Tiernan, IHA Coordinator. Angus Robertson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture and Thomas Byrne, Minister of State for European Affairs gave opening remarks on Irish Scottish relations. This was followed by a discussion on culture, collaboration & diaspora by panel consisting of: Jerry O'Donovan, consul general of Ireland in Edinburgh; Katy McNeil, Head of Scottish Gov in Ireland; Triona McCormack, VP strategy & engagement UCD; & Ciarán Walsh associate director Culture Ireland–chaired by Prof Catherine O'Leary, co-chair SAHA.



R-L: Chair Prof Catherine O'Leary; Jerry O'Donovan, consul general of Ireland in Edinburgh; Katy McNeil, Head of Scottish Gov in Ireland; Triona McCormack, VP strategy & engagement UCD; & Ciarán Walsh associate director Culture Ireland

The event concluded with a showcase of Scottish Irish research projects by Dr Aoife Crummy (ATU) and Dr Helen MacGrath (UCC) - awardees of the Ireland-Scotland Bilateral Network Grants. Over 200 people attended this hybrid event through a mix of online and in-person attendance. The full event is available to view on the [IHA website](#).

Ireland Scotland Bilateral Cooperation Framework 2030 Launch

On 26 November 2025, the Minister of State for International Development and Diaspora, Neale Richmond TD, and the First Minister of Scotland, John Swinney MSP, met at Iveagh House, Dublin to launch the Ireland Scotland Bilateral Cooperation Framework 2030. The IHA Coordinator attended the launch; IHA features on p. 15 of this document.



L to R: Minister Neale Richmond TD and First Minister John Swinney MSP

Annual IHA Conference 2025

Feeding the Soul: Transnational Narratives of Food and Belonging

Co-organised by Dr. Bianca Cataldi (UG), Dr. Sarah Comyn (UCD), Dr. Megan Kuster (UCD) and Prof Anne Fuchs (UCD), was sponsored by the Irish Humanities Alliances and took place at the UCD Humanities Institute on 4-5 September 2025.

The conference welcomed an interdisciplinary cohort of 16 international speakers from Europe, the United States and Canada and two keynote speakers: Dr. Raúl Matta (Centre de Recherche Institut Lyfe) and Dr. Tania Aguila-Way (University of Toronto).



Group picture on the final day of the conference

Building on the vision articulated in the original call for papers, the conference sought to investigate how food functions as a narrative medium through which belonging, exile and hybridity are negotiated. Food operates in artistic and cultural texts not only as a symbol of nourishment but also as a lens through which we perceive global inequalities between excess and scarcity, between the global North and South, and between the preservation and erosion of indigenous foodways.

The theme invited interdisciplinary contributions from literary and cultural studies, visual arts, film, history, journalism, and environmental humanities, resulting in a rich dialogue that traced connections between local kitchens and transnational “foodscapes”. Across panels, speakers also interrogated the sensory dimensions of taste and smell, the politics of food production and waste, and the affective bonds forged around shared meals and recipes.



Walk & Talk to the UCD Rosemount Environmental Research Station



One month later: Seeds of Action

The conference programme included a guided visit to the UCD Rosemount Centre and Apple Orchard, and a practical “Seed Paper” workshop. The event closed with the launch of the new IHA website, introduced by Prof Sonja Tiernan, and a convivial wine reception hosted by the UCD Humanities Institute.

Professional training

Environmental Humanities Challenges & Opportunities Workshop held at the Royal Irish Academy on 26 March 2026. The Environmental Humanities WG hosted this early-stage researcher training event aimed at doctoral students and post-doctoral scholars in areas including landscapes; eco-feminism; environmental history; aesthetics and senses; decolonial ecologies; political ecology; language and culture; communication and storytelling; creative arts; and eco-criticism.



The workshop sought to build community among early career researchers and to facilitate discussion of the challenges and opportunities of research in Environmental Humanities. Over 40 attendees discussed pertinent questions before a panel on the Challenges (and Opportunities) in Environmental Humanities led by Prof Michael Cronin (TCD) and Dr. Maureen O'Connor (UCC). A [blog](#) by Céline Thobois-Gupta provides an engaging reflection on the event and a full [report on the workshop](#) can be downloaded.

Information sessions

The IHA Executive are pleased to hold online or in-person information sessions with colleagues at our member institutions when requested. Sessions provide further details to colleagues about writing impact case studies, joining working groups or any aspect of IHA membership. In October 2025 an online session took place with colleagues at Mary Immaculate College.

Partnerships

As a founding member of the [European Alliance for Social Sciences and Humanities](#) (EASSH), the IHA continues our collaboration with our European partner through attendance at meetings including the AGM in Brussels as well as engaging with calls for comments and/or engagement.

We remain supportive and in dialogue with our colleagues in both the [Scottish Arts and Humanities Alliance](#) (SAHA) and [Wales Arts and Humanities Alliance](#) (WAHA).

Working Groups

The Irish Humanities Alliance currently host six Working Groups at the cutting edge of current issues and trends in arts and humanities. WGs play a vital role in the IHA work programme producing position papers and research reports; organising public seminars and training workshops which inform the community while contributing to HEIs and the national research policy agenda in Ireland.

Environmental Humanities



Co-chaired by Assoc Prof Marc Caball (UCD) and Dr Leah O'Hearn (MU), WG meetings took place regularly during 2025-26 with a view to expanding representation across IHA member institutions. The WG currently consists of members from: UCD; UCC; TCD; UG; MU; MIC; DCU; TUD; UU; TCD; & ATU. The WG is committed to enabling networking opportunities for interested humanities scholars and academics across a broad range of career stages.

WG members aim to produce a policy-style paper relating to the environmental implications of AI. It is proposed that a short policy statement will be circulated as widely as possible among academics, policymakers, and the broader public. In this paper, it is proposed to consider the environmental costs of AI infrastructures and the possible contribution of AI in tandem with environmental humanities to the amelioration of the impacts of climate change and ecological degradation among other issues.

Horizon Europe



Chaired by Allen White (UCC), the Horizon Europe WG was formed as a body of experts to respond to calls for comments /feedback on aspects of draft Horizon Europe work programmes. WG members have in the past been tasked with responding to upcoming calls issued by the Irish National Delegate. Future tasks could include investigating the opportunities beyond the current Horizon Europe to the successor initiatives under Framework Programme 10.

Legal Humanities



Co-chaired by Prof Eugene McNulty (DCU) and Dr Adam Hanna (UCC) WG members actively organise and participate in seminars, roundtable discussions and public engagement activities. The WG aims to provide a connective forum for encouraging interdisciplinary and inter-institutional scholarly collaboration; gather information on activities in the Legal Humanities conducted in HEIs across the island; gather expertise and resources; and provide a network to be drawn upon in the design and preparation of funding bids.

Plans for 2026-27 include furthering work on an edited collection *Antigone and Ireland* – a product of the WG's launch event at the Abbey Theatre, which will showcase work by group members. Members are also investigating the possibility – raised in the wake of the symposium – *Visions of Democracy in Art and Literature* – of a collaboration with the journal *Law and Humanities*.

Medical and Health Humanities



Co-chaired by Prof Desmond O'Neill (TCD) and Prof Des Fitzgerald (UCC) this WG was reconstituted in 2024. WG members meet regularly and are actively contributing to the design of the IHA annual conference in September 2026 by organising panels, keynote presentations and though attendance.

In July 2026, members organised a letter in response to the eligibility changes by Wellcome Trust after it was announced that researchers based in the Republic of Ireland will no longer be eligible to act as lead investigator for the Wellcome Trust Discovery Research schemes. [The letter](#), signed by over 50 established scholars in medical and health humanities, was sent to Wellcome Trust management and shared online.

Research Ethics & AI



Chaired by Prof James Kapalo, this WG was recently formed to address the distinct and rapidly evolving challenges, both national and global, confronting arts and humanities research. Amongst the diverse areas that the WG aims to respond to is the role of AI in humanities research, including copyright and publishing, research ethics review processes within and beyond the university, and ethics and integrity training for graduate students.

Research & Innovation



Co-chaired by Prof Marie-Louise Coolahan and Prof Brendan Dooley, this WG was established in June 2023, in response to the announced formation of Research Ireland / Taighde Éireann. The WG's activity in this past academic year has mainly concerned the coordination of responses to the new RI/TÉ strategy for 2026-30. Key points of disagreement have been the decision to dismantle the Government of Ireland PhD scholarship and postdoctoral fellowship programmes, as well as the focus on commercially translatable research.

The WG's published [response](#) to the new strategy initiated a new dialogue with RI/TÉ attempting to gain a better statistical picture of the funding landscape in Ireland in comparison with elsewhere, which will now form part of a further document prepared by the WG outlining the statistical findings and accompanied by a substantial statement of the benefits and value of Arts and Humanities research. A recent [Open Letter](#) to Minister James Lawless published on 27 May 2026 and subscribed by 2,686 signatories (20 Aug 2026) including many IHA members, reinforced many of the ongoing concerns raised by the WG.

Publications

The Irish Humanities Alliance regularly release public statements in response to national and international events affirming our values. Statements and reports published during 2025-26 can be directly accessed through links below and an archive of all documents is available through the [Resources](#) page on our website.

Statements

In 2025-26 the IHA released four public statements regarding funding changes, staff redundancies and promoting the value of arts and humanities consultation in Ireland.

- [Letter to Wellcome Trust Re: Discovery Research Criteria Funding Eligibility](#), 13 July 2026

On 17 June 2026 the [Wellcome Trust](#) notified Irish HEIs that from October 2026, applicants from the Republic of Ireland will no longer be eligible to act as a lead investigator for the Trust's Discovery Research schemes. The IHA Medical and Health Humanities Working Group formulated a letter to the Executive Director and the Director of Research Funding at Wellcome Trust outlining the concerns from medical humanities scholars in Ireland. This letter was signed by more than 50 scholars in the field, produced as a statement and published on the IHA website, with promotion through social media. The statement garnered further online support.

- [Response to Taighde Éireann-Research Ireland strategy](#), 5 May 2026

On 2 March 2026, Taighde Éireann-Research Ireland launched its strategy document, [Curiosity Capability Competitiveness: Charting Ireland's Research and Innovation Future 2026-2030](#). While acknowledging that the strategy planned for the recently established funding agency represented important new developments, the IHA Research and Innovation Working Group produced a statement outlining concern about the marginalisation of the Arts and Humanities apparent in this strategy. The statement garnered much interest and inspired a group of academics to issue an Open Letter - [Concern about Research Ireland's Strategy and Programme Plan](#) which was signed by over 2,600 scholars across Ireland. This letter led to a response [Statement by Research Ireland](#) who initiated further consultations and meetings with the arts and humanities community.

- [Statement of Solidarity and Support with Ulster University Colleagues](#), 30 April 2026

In April 2026, staff at Ulster University were informed that up to 450 staff at the University would be made redundant. The IHA executive issued a statement of solidarity with colleagues. The IHA remains committed to supporting Ulster University colleagues as the redundancy process progresses. We stand with our colleagues at Ulster University and affirm our collective commitment to defending the integrity and future of arts and humanities scholarship.

- Statement in response to the appointment of 12 members to the new National Science Advice Forum, 26 February 2026

On 26 September 2025, an 'Invitation for expressions of interest: National Science Advice Forum' was launched. The call included expressions of interest from humanities academics and practitioners, to join the new National Science Advice Forum. This call generated much interest and support from within the humanities community.

On 24 Feb 2026, the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, James Lawless TD, announced the appointment of 12 members to the National Science Advice Forum, no humanities specialists were appointed to this advice forum. The IHA issued a statement on 26 February stressing that the National Science Advice Forum would be greatly enhanced by humanities involvement. 'There are no areas of major scientific challenge (from pandemic preparedness to AI and technological innovation) where the work of the Forum would not benefit from Humanities input.' The *Irish Times* published the concerns of IHA in the letters to the editor on 2 March 2027.



Reports

On 26 March 2026, the IHA Environmental Humanities Working Group hosted a gathering of early career researchers and doctoral students from universities across the island of Ireland. Held at the Royal Irish Academy, the event aimed to support the building of networks among ECRs as they approach the challenges and opportunities of working in the environmental humanities space. This workshop has become an annual event and to continue building a momentum, the WG publishes a detailed report on the proceedings.

Report on the IHA Professional Training Workshop in the Environmental Humanities, 23 June 2026

Website

In September 2025, the IHA launched a new website aimed at improving engagement and accessibility. Further possibilities for engagement include a new Emerging Scholars section welcoming blog contributions from early career researchers and post graduate students with submissions relating to their research. In recognition of the importance of IHA Working Groups, there is now a dedicated WG section to share details of their activities, reports and to announce events.

Since launching, www.irishhumanities.ie recorded 14k active users up to 18 August 2026 with event counts of over 86k hits.



AboutNews and eventsWorking GroupsResources

Latest News

The Humanities Blog is a collection of Humanities perspectives and comment pieces on news, current affairs, and publications. We encourage contributions from researchers and those interested in Arts & Humanities. The Emerging Scholars Series is a new series welcoming contributions from early career researchers and emerging scholars with submissions relating to their research.

Please read the [template for authors](#) before submitting.



LEGAL HUMANITIES (AND MORE)

Event Overview: 'Visions of Democracy in Art and Literature'

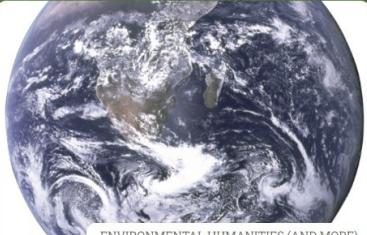
Published: 17 Aug 2026



HISTORY (AND MORE)

The Making of an Irish War of Independence Heritage Trail

Published: 28 Jul 2026



ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES (AND MORE)

Reflecting on IHA Professional Training Workshop: Environmental Humanities

Published: 7 Apr 2026

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Looking ahead to 2026 - 27

IHA Annual Conference (2026) in SETU Waterford

South East Technological University (SETU) is proud to host the 2026 IHA Annual Conference, *Un/Silencing Healthcare: Voices, Power and Imagination*, at its historic College Street Campus in Waterford on 3 & 4 September 2026. The conference brings together humanities scholars, healthcare professionals, artists, policymakers, practitioners and people with lived experience to explore how voices are heard, silenced and transformed within healthcare.



The conference reflects SETU's commitment to interdisciplinary research, public engagement and addresses contemporary societal challenges through the humanities. Across two days, delegates will participate in keynote lectures, parallel paper sessions, creative workshops, performances, panel discussions, exhibitions and postgraduate activities exploring themes including voice and representation, ethics, disability, technology, artificial intelligence, creativity and inclusion in healthcare.

Highlights include keynote addresses by Dr Jess Mannion (ATU) and Professor Des Fitzpatrick (UCC), alongside a creative plenary session exploring patient-centered artistic engagement whilst receiving healthcare. The programme also features roundtable discussions, publication workshops for early career researchers, creative practice sessions, exhibitions and poster presentations that demonstrate the richness and diversity of contemporary medical and health humanities research.



Delegates will also experience the distinctive setting of Waterford, Ireland's oldest city, renowned for its Viking and medieval heritage, vibrant cultural life and creative industries. A guided tour of the Waterford Memories Project will introduce participants to an important survivor-centered digital humanities initiative based on the College Street Campus, examining the histories of coercive confinement and amplifying the voices of survivors.

As one of Ireland's newest technological universities, SETU is committed to research that creates meaningful social impact through collaboration across disciplines and communities. Hosting the 2026 IHA Annual Conference provides an opportunity to showcase both the University's growing leadership in the humanities and the important contribution that humanities research makes to understanding health, wellbeing and society.

First IHA AGM

From this year, the IHA will host an Annual General Meeting (AGM) during the annual conference. The AGM welcomes all staff and students of our member institutions to attend and engage with the work of the IHA. Our first AGM will be held on Friday 4 September 2026 at SETU as part of our conference programme.

Call for proposals to host IHA annual conference 2027

The Irish Humanities Alliance invites proposals to host the annual conference every year (submissions normally open in June). Academic staff, at all stages of their career, including early career scholars on full-time, part-time, or temporary contracts in HEIs that are members of the IHA are eligible to submit a proposal. We especially welcome proposals by collective projects and proposals that involve early career researchers in the planning process. This is a competitive process, and the successful applicants will have the opportunity to run a conference in September 2027 under the auspices of the Alliance, underwritten up to €3,500. The [call for submissions](#) is currently open until **5pm Wednesday, 7 October 2026**.

Key Priorities for 2026-27

Membership Expansion

In the last decade there has been a progressive change in the landscape of universities in Ireland as well as the development of humanities subjects in Higher and Further Education Institutions. Over the last three years we have expanded our membership base from 11 to 14 institutional members. To further strengthen our alliance and to ensure full representation of the humanities across our island, we aim to continue broadening our membership base as we progress. We welcome discussions with members from institutions seeking to join this alliance.

Impact Case Studies

The IHA website hosts an '[Impact Case Studies](#)' section - a collection documenting the wider social, economic, and cultural impact of funding for arts and humanities research. These case studies cover a diverse range of projects based in our member institutions demonstrating how deep and wide-ranging the impact of humanities research can be. The IHA look to develop the base of case studies showcased on the website and welcome submissions of interest. Please contact Sonja Tiernan s.tiernan@ria.ie to discuss the suitability of your funded project.

AI and Humanities

As noted by Prof Dooley, the IHA is 'committed to following and examining the application of the new knowledge technology in the many areas where it is being implemented, while at the same time paying due attention to public awareness of the new developments and their significance' (p. 4). Developments in AI are being monitored through examinations by the Environmental Humanities and the Research Ethics & AI WGs, as we attempt to identify the role and implications of AI in humanities research and teaching.

Funding

A continued focus on ensuring that Research Ireland – Taighde Éireann will provide support for research excellence at all stages of academic career development in the humanities; and secure adequate funding of humanities research.

Internal Governance

IHA Board Meetings:

The IHA Board has four meetings every academic year, including one AGM. The board aims to meet in person at least twice per year. In-person meetings are hosted by a member institution, which may showcase its research facilities to board members on meeting day. There are, on occasion, extraordinary meetings outside the four annual meeting dates.

Board Meetings held 2025-26

10 October 2025 – Online

16 January 2026 - Maynooth University

17th April 2026 - Online

12 June 2026 – University College Cork



Further information

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