

Research and Innovation Overview 2024

Department of Psychology

The Department of Psychology at Maynooth University, within the Faculty of Science and Engineering, continues to build on its reputation for research excellence. In 2022-23, with 22 full-time academic staff members and 12 research staff, the department contributed significantly to the university's strategic goals and maintained its ranking among the top 150 psychology departments worldwide, as recognised by the 2023 Times World University Rankings.

Head of Department: Professor Deirdre Desmond



Research Themes and Focus Areas

The Department makes an internationally distinctive and vibrant contribution to research and practice with a focus on four intersecting themes:

- **Rehabilitation, Disability & Health Psychology** – focusing mostly on the psychology of the well-being of individuals and communities and their service provision, in terms of impairments/disability, assistive technologies, coping and empowerment.
- **Mental Health, Community & Positive Psychology** – focusing mostly on the psychology of mental health and well-being of individuals, families and communities, as well as on service provision and evaluation, particularly with a focus on vulnerability, marginalisation, resilience, and personal growth.
- **Neuroscience, Behaviour & Cognition** – focusing mostly on the psychology of experimental methods to understand and address fundamental challenges in intelligence, thought processes, neuronal functioning and human and animal behaviour.
- **Organisations, Systems and Policy** – focusing mostly on the psychology of complex systems problems, of inter-relatedness and change; working with a broad range of businesses, service providers and international agencies.



Significant Research Outputs

In 2022-23, the Department of Psychology produced a total of 89 research outputs, including 67 peer-reviewed journal articles, 4 edited books or chapters, and 9 other professional publications:

Publications

- Notable publications appeared in prestigious journals such as Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Psychological Review, Neuron, and World Psychiatry, reflecting the department's commitment to high-impact research.
- Two staff members, Dr Michael Daly and Professor Philip Hyland, were named among Clarivate's Highly Cited Researchers for 2023, underscoring the global impact of their work.
- Dr Michael Daly published a paper entitled, The psychological legacy of past obesity and early mortality, in BMC Medicine
- Professor Sinead McGilloway with graduate student Dr Mary Cronin published a review of clinical guidelines on supporting family carers in BMC Primary Care.

Awards

- The department secured over €1.6 million in new research grants, including funding from Science Foundation Ireland for the STEM Passport for Inclusion project, led by Dr Katriona O'Sullivan, and Enterprise Ireland funding for the REHABILITATE project, led by Dr Joanna McHugh Power.



Collaborations and Partnerships

The department actively engages in international collaborations, with 69% of its publications co-authored with researchers from around the world, far exceeding the national average:

- **International Research Networks:** The department's global reach is demonstrated by its participation in high-profile research networks, including partnerships with the UKRI and international NGOs, reflecting its commitment to addressing pressing global challenges.
- **Engaged Research:** The SPACE project (Supportive Environments for Physical and Social Activity, Healthy Ageing, and Cognitive Health), co-led by Dr Joanna McHugh Power, explores how living environments affect cognitive health and dementia. This UKRI-funded project has involved extensive stakeholder engagement, producing public webinars, fact sheets, and an online Geographic Information System dashboard to enhance its public impact.



Research Impact and Societal Contributions

The department's research is closely tied to societal impact, particularly in health and well-being. Collaborative projects with the Irish Health Service Executive have explored young people's views on suicide prevention and the relationship between sleep and ADHD. The department's partnerships with organisations like ALONE, MS Ireland, and Bodywhys also highlight its commitment to addressing health and social issues through applied research.



Future Directions

The Department will continue to cultivate research activities across and beyond its research themes, allowing for insights and initiatives to flourish beyond narrow research or disciplinary boundaries and delivering high quality research of enduring academic, policy and societal impact and significance. Through its strong international collaborations, engaged research, and significant contributions to societal well-being, the department continues to drive advancements in psychological science.