

CO-DESIGNING WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING AT THE PHD LEVEL

Research Question: How is success perceived and experienced by students, their supervisors, and employers in PhD work-integrated learning programmes?



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OBJECTIVES

- To create a reusable framework for work-integrated learning in PhD programmes based on feedback from stakeholders.
- To understand how success is understood and experienced in PhD work-integrated learning experiences.
- To explore how differing understandings of success impact the relationships between the three stakeholders (PhD students, their supervisors, and employers).
- To reflect on how technological interventions can be used to improve reflection activities, experiences, and evaluation methods associated with work-integrated learning.

UN SDGs

Quality Education

- The framework and research will support the goal of relevant skills training to support employment and entrepreneurship.
- It will be inclusive of a variety of experiences and support lifelong learning through the inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders' feedback.

Decent Work and Economic Growth

- Industry-academia collaboration can lead to innovation and growth in the economy.
- Graduates who have the necessary skills and experience for the economy have more employment opportunities.

Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

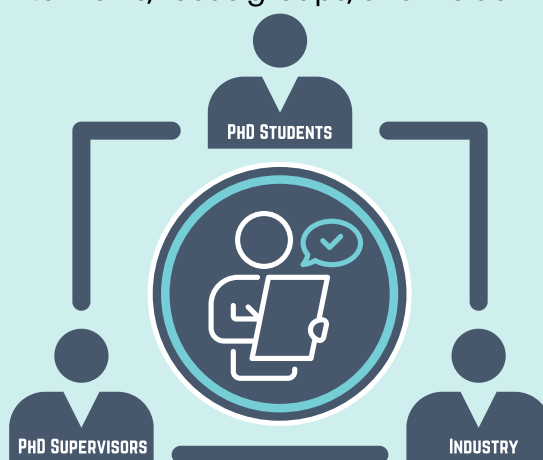
- Ireland is focused on being an Innovation leader and enhancing its status as a 'knowledge economy'.
- Emphasizing the role of research outside of academia is important for innovation and the overall economy.

DEFINITION

Work-integrated learning (WIL), also called work based learning (WBL) or work placement, is a type of experiential learning and includes formal and informal learning that occurs in the context of work or the workplace.

HOW

The research engages with three stakeholders: PhD students, their supervisors, and employers in industry. It includes survey research and narrative inquiry incorporating interviews, focus groups, and insider research.



IMPORTANCE

While WIL has been suggested as a warranted addition to PhD programmes, putting it into practice, including understanding the design, evaluation, and outcomes of work-integrated learning, has not been extensively studied in Ireland. Additionally, only 17% of recent PhD graduates participated in WIL as part of their doctoral training. WIL in PhD programmes requires further study because:

There are more people with PhDs in Ireland than ever before.

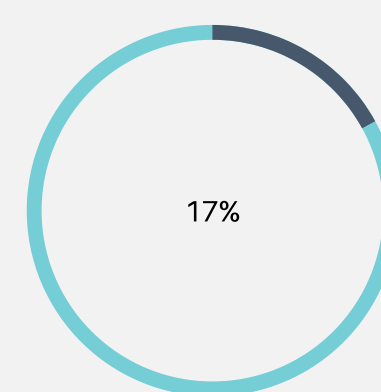
- The number of people with PhDs in Ireland increased by 99.5% in the ten-year period between 2006 and 2016.

The majority of PhD graduates today do not work in the education sector.

- While the PhD traditionally prepared graduates for careers in academia, only 44% of PhD graduates work in the education sector today. The rest must adapt their doctoral training to different career paths and find work elsewhere.
- The unemployment rate for PhD graduates is very low and it's important to understand how PhD skills fit into the overall workforce.

Research and the production of new knowledge is a "strategic resource" in the knowledge economy.

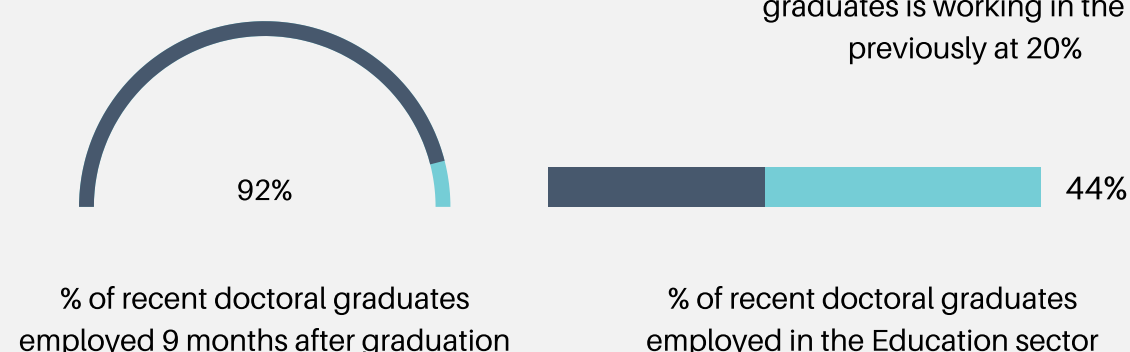
- Attracting and retaining researchers, both in the education sector and in industry, is important for participation in the knowledge economy and responding to societal change.
- The League of European Research Universities cites recruiting people for research careers in Europe as the biggest challenge for being internationally competitive in research and innovation.
- There is a growing awareness, as evidenced by government policies and spending, about the importance of research across all industries and the impact of research on the economy.



% of recent doctoral graduates who completed internships or work placements during their studies



#1 source of jobs for recent doctoral graduates is working in the job previously at 20%



WHAT'S NEXT

Progress:

Initial survey for students (pre-placement) & Interviews to be conducted May 2022

Next Steps:

Comprehensive literature review
Surveys & interviews for supervisors & industry
Followup surveys and interviews post-placement, post-graduation
Framework creation
Framework trial

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