



Access to Higher Education:

Emerging Practice and Professional Challenges in a Changing Access Context

**National Access Conference
23 & 24 April 2024, Devere Hall UCC**

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Day 1

10:15 Registration

11:00 Welcome – Olive Byrne, Head of Access UCC.

11:10 Opening Address – Prof Stephen Byrne, Deputy President and Registrar, UCC

11:25 PATH 3 - A Cluster Approach: SOAR Project Inter-Institutional Partnership Case Study

Research Presentation: Sheila McGovern

Panel Discussion

Chair: Prof Máire Leane, School Applied Social Studies, UCC, Principal Investigator, SOAR Project

Panel Members:

- Prof Stephen Byrne, Deputy President and Registrar, UCC (South Cluster)
- David Denieffe, Vice-President for Student Experience SETU Carlow (South Cluster)
- Dr Shelia Flanagan Registrar and Vice President for Academic Affairs in Dundalk Institute of Technology (MEND Cluster)
- Dr Bairbre Fleming, Director of Access & Lifelong Learning. Chair, Leinster Pillar 1 Cluster.

12:15 PATH 3 Practice Showcase: South Cluster SOAR Project

Overview of initiatives developed throughout PATH 3.

- Work Stream: Enabling Transitions: Majella McCarthy, SETU Waterford
- Work Stream: Connecting Communities, Connecting Curriculum, Damian Butler, UCC
- Work Stream: Travellers in Education: Leanne McDonagh, MTU Cork Campus

13:15 Lunch

14:15 Parallel Sessions -

Workshop: Supporting Irish Travellers in Education

Venue: O'Rahilly Building, Room G46

- i) Community-Led Initiatives: Leanne McDonagh, Traveller Education Co-Ordinator Cork Campus, Christina Boland, Traveller Liaison Officer, MTU Kerry Campus
- ii) The Social Determinants of Education: Dr Linda Greene, Education Strategy Coordinator, Traveller Visibility Group Ltd.

Workshop: Enabling Transitions

Venue: Boole Basement, Lecture Theatre 5

Communication, Connection and Community; Developing transitions supports for autistic students within MTU: Julie O'Donovan, Disability Transition Programme Co-Ordinator; Hugh O'Donnell, Department of Mechanical & Biomedical Manufacturing Engineering; Elaine Dennehy, Project Co-Ordinator, Linked Schools Team, Access Service, MTU Cork Campus.

Workshop: Grassroots to Government

Venue: Devere Hall

Impact of College Connect's MEND Community Needs Analysis on Engagement of People with Criminal Justice Histories in Higher Education through the MJMU Partnership:

Assistant Governor Paddy Moran, Niall Walsh, Manager Pathways Centre, Eilís Ní Chorcora, Research Manager College Connect, Dr. Rose Ryan, Director of Access

Chair - Gemma Lynch, MAP/MJMU

Panel:

- Amanda Sutton, Assistant Governor Wheatfield
- Dr Justin Sinnott, Building Bridges Solas
- Dr James Lawlor, Narrative 4
- Jenny Burke, TUS Athlone

15:15 Afternoon Break & Cluster Information Stands

15:45 PATH 3 Practice Showcase

- Leinster Pillar I Cluster: Irina Pilos, PATH Coordinator, UCD
- West North West Cluster: Cathal Shanagher, Post Entry Support & Planning Coordinator, University of Galway, & Brian McGonagle, Access Officer ATU Letterkenny
- MEND Cluster: Deirdre Fitzpatrick, Project Manager College Connect and Eilís Ní Chorcora, Research Manager

16:30 Close

18:30 Conference Dinner – Aula Maxima (Ticketed Event)



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Day 2

09:30 Access Practitioner Study Access Practitioners: Our Role, Our Identity, Our Vision

Research Findings & Recommendations-Dr Rebekah Brennan, Postdoctoral Researcher, SOAR Project

10:00 Access Practice Keynote: *Access Practitioners - Collaborators and Agents of Change*

Muriel Alexander, Development Manager, SCAPP (Scotland's Community of Access and Participation Practitioners), University of Stirling



SCAPP and the Scottish Framework for Fair Access, was launched in 2019, formed from a key recommendation from Scotland's Blueprint for Fairness which reported in 2016. SCAPP is the only sector wide network for WA and WP Practitioners dedicated to Scotland bringing cross-sector professionals together through networking and quality learning and development opportunities to support the professionalisation of a Widening Access and Widening Participation (WA and WP) community to facilitate fair access and meet WP targets for admission to Higher Education.

Muriel has worked across a variety of organisations including education, industry, enterprise and careers over a thirty five year period, and has undertaken roles encompassing project management and development, marketing, business engagement, strategic planning and management roles at University of West of Scotland, Glasgow Caledonian University, University of Strathclyde, University of Glasgow, Forth Valley College and now as SCAPP's Development Manager

She brings experience, knowledge and skills in lifelong learning, admissions, student recruitment, articulation and student administration with widening participation being at the heart of all of these roles and responsibilities.

10:30 Access Practice Table Discussion

11:00 Morning Break - Cluster Information Stands

11:20 Table Discussion Feedback

12:15 PATH 3 Practice Showcase:

TU Dublin, Mid-West Cluster

- TU Dublin: Patricia Owens, PATH Coordinator & Karen Carter, Access and Outreach Project Officer, TU Dublin.
- Mid-West Cluster: Deirdre O'Connor, Access Officer, UL, & Dr Carolann Bargary, Access Officer TUS Midwest.

12:45 Lunch

13:45 Access Policy Keynote: National Access Plan A Strategic Action Plan for Equity of Access, Participation and Success in Higher Education 2022-2028 - Challenges & Opportunities

Dr Louise Callinan, Head of Access Policy, Higher Education Authority



Dr Louise Callinan is Head of Access Policy with the Higher Education Authority (HEA), responsible for leading and monitoring the implementation of the National Access Plan 2022-2028. She has held various roles within the HEA, most recently as Head of Research and Research Policy, and as Director of the Irish Research Council, the national funding agency for research across all disciplines. Prior to this, she was responsible for managing the higher education landscape reform process including the creation of technological universities and the associated national funding streams, and the implementation of the System Performance Framework.

14:05 Panel Discussion - NAP Implementation

Chair: Dr Brendan O'Donnell Registrar MTU Kerry Campus

Panel Members:

- Dr Louise Callinan, Head of Access Policy, Higher Education Authority
- James Leonard, a community worker, podcaster, motivational speaker and lecturer. James' area of interest is in criminology due to his own lived experience of addiction and incarceration.
- Anne Burke, Southern Traveller Health Network Joint Co-Ordinator, Co-Founder of the Travellers Visibility Group, Community Partner and Member of South Cluster PATH Advisory Group
- Fionnuala O'Connell, Integration Support Worker Cork City Council, former Assistant Programme Coordinator, Cork Migrant Centre.
- Jack Ross, Student, 3rd Year Mathematical Sciences Student, UCC
- Olive Byrne, Head of Access UCC, Chair of PATH Advisory Group

15:00 Afternoon Break - Cluster Information Stands

15:25 Conference Summary - Learning, Recommendations, Actions, Key Take-Aways

16:00 Close
