



## Minister opens NAIRTL Bologna Symposium



Left to right: The Minister for Education and Science, Batt O'Keeffe TD, with Brendan Murphy, President of CIT, and Liam Hodnett, Head of Engineering Faculty, CIT. Picture reproduced by courtesy of the Evening Echo

The Minister for Education and Science, Batt O'Keeffe, opened NAIRTL's Bologna Symposium as his first official function in his new role on May 12th. The symposium, entitled "Will your qualifications be recognised?" was held at CIT's Cork School of Music.

Minister O'Keeffe said: "The establishment of the Academy is a wonderfully progressive initiative. It has enormous potential to promote real quality improvement in higher education by enabling and supporting teaching staff to use and improve good practice in research-informed teaching and learning. The Government's major strategic investment plans in our national research and development capacity are extremely important to our future prosperity, competitiveness and social cohesion. As Minister for Education and Science, I will be continuing to lay major emphasis on the importance of that agenda for developing capacity and excellence in our fourth level research system."

The Symposium discussed the strategic implications of the Bologna Agreement for professional qualifications, and was the first of a series being organised by the Bologna Process Working Group. The discussions focussed on engineering in the context of

lifelong learning, and examined the approaches of institutions such as Engineers Ireland and the Institute of Chemical Engineers to the recognition and transferability of professional engineering qualifications.



Professor de Azevedo

Thought-provoking presentations were delivered by Dermot Coughlan of UL, Professor Sebastião Feyo de Azevedo, Ordem dos Engenheiros, Portugal; Neil Atkinson, Institute of Chemical Engineers; Eimear Ruane, postgraduate engineering student, NUIG; Dr Barry O'Connor, CIT; and Denis McGrath, Engineers Ireland.



Working Group members  
Professor Biswajit Basu,  
Dr Norma Ryan and  
Professor Jim Gosling

Podcasts and presentations are available at NAIRTL's website <http://www.nairtl.ie>

## Dual launch success for publications

The National Academy launched two publications on 14<sup>th</sup> May in University College Cork – the NAIRTL Annual Report for 2007,



Left to right: Brendan Goggin, Dr Norma Ryan, Professor Ray Land, Professor Grace Neville and Jennifer Murphy

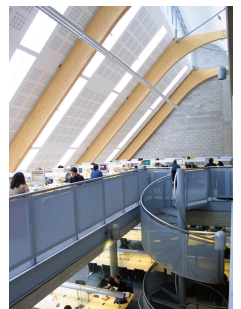
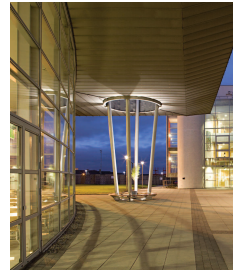
and conference proceedings from the Academy's first Annual Conference in November 2007 – *International Perspectives on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*.

The Annual Report, which is available free of charge from the Academy's website, is divided into two parts. The first part gives details of NAIRTL's activities in 2007 while the second part includes thirty case studies from partner institutions illustrating a wide range of approaches to integrating research with teaching and learning.

## Second Annual Conference – "Challenging Assumptions"

NAIRTL is inviting abstracts for

presentations, workshops and posters at its second annual conference, to be held at Waterford Institute of Technology on November 13th and 14th 2008. The conference theme, "Teaching and Learning in Higher Education – Challenging Assumptions" is intended to highlight and enhance issues that contribute to the advancement of linkages between research and teaching and learning linkages.



Above: WIT's IT building and library

Abstracts of not more than 300 words should be sent for consideration to [nairtl@ucc.ie](mailto:nairtl@ucc.ie), outlining how your topic contributes to challenging assumptions at one or more of the following levels:

- National
- Regional
- Disciplinary
- International

The closing date for consideration of abstracts is **Monday 21st July 2008**.

## NAIRTL Awards for Excellence in Teaching

The National Academy received a wonderful response to the call for nominations for the NAIRTL Excellence in Teaching Awards.

Teaching and research are both central to the role of academic staff, while excellence in teaching, and in creative and scholarly work, go hand in hand. The NAIRTL Awards aim to acknowledge academic staff who successfully unite these two roles.

The awards are intended to recognise teaching accomplishments and to promote public recognition as well as celebrating the teaching profession.

Up to five awards of €5,000 each will be made in 2008.

## Selection committee considers funding applications

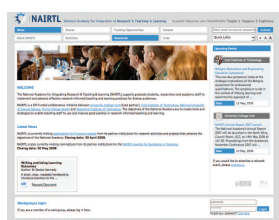
The National Academy's funding selection committee is currently considering applications for grants from partner institutions. This initiative invited applications for grants of up to €5,000 and up to €20,000. There was a tremendous response to the call. More than ninety applications were received for projects that aim to advance research-informed teaching and learning through the integration of research. It is expected that applicants will be informed of the outcome of the selection process in July. This year applications were invited from the partner institutions of the National Academy. It is envisaged that the scheme will be open to all Irish higher education institutions from 2009.



## Website redesign provides easy event registration

The NAIRTL website has been redesigned to provide new features such as event registration and requests for publications. Improvements include an events calendar and an archive of past events. Photographs, videos, sound recordings and Powerpoint presentations are available to download.

The website is used to promote all events relating to the integration of research and teaching and learning. If you would like to advertise any relevant events or activities please email [nairtl@ucc.ie](mailto:nairtl@ucc.ie).



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Professor Ray Land with Cynthia Deane

The National Academy's first Annual Conference was jointly hosted by the Irish Universities Quality Board. The proceedings include keynote presentations delivered by Professor Áine Hyland, Professor Mick Healey, Dr Barbara Cambridge, Professor Jean Brihault, Professor Andrea Nolan and Kris McElhinney. The proceedings also reproduce the poster presentations from the November 2007 event.

Both publications can be ordered from the NAIRTL website <http://www.nairtl.ie>.

To celebrate the dual launch, NAIRTL invited Professor Ray Land, Director of the Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement, University of Strathclyde, to present his sector-wide research project "Using Research-Teaching Linkages to Enhance Graduate Attributes". Ray summarises: "This project was commissioned by QAA Scotland and considered how to support the achievement of graduate attributes through research, creative, scholarly and performance work to inform the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment activities, and the learning environment."

"The enquiry adopted a broad, inclusive definition of research to embrace practice- and consultancy-led research, research of local economic significance, contributions to

the work of associated research institutes or other universities and various types of practice-based and applied research including performances; creative works; and industrial or professional secondments.

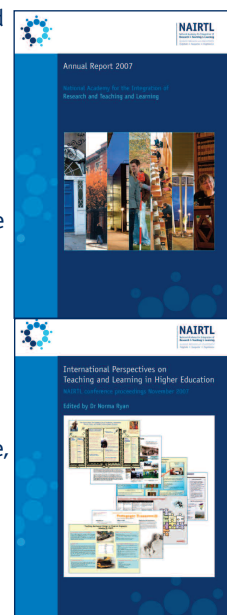
"Twenty Scottish Higher Education Institutions, varying widely in terms of size, profile and mission, participated in the study. Many of the institutions surveyed were in a state of transformation, hence the drivers tended to be different in each HEI. What emerged was an overall strategic intention but a diversified outcome, with a range of innovative approaches."

Ray Land's presentation was followed by a very interesting talk by Suzanne McEndoo entitled "How to teach Quantum Physics to my Grandmother". Suzanne graduated with an Undergraduate Degree in Theoretical Physics from Trinity College Dublin and is currently completing a Postgraduate Degree in Physics in UCC. She was the winner of both the Science for All Competition, UCC 2008 and the Intervarsity ScienceSpeak Competition



2008. Podcasts of both presentations are available to download from <http://www.nairtl.ie>

Suzanne McEndoo



Both NAIRTL publications are available on request via the website <http://www.nairtl.ie>

## About NAIRTL

NAIRTL is an initiative funded by the HEA Strategic Initiatives Fund.



NAIRTL is located at the Distillery House, University College Cork. For details regarding any of our events or activities please log onto our website. Alternatively, you are always welcome to give us a call.

If you would like to highlight a research project or linkage in the National Academy newsletter or make any suggestions for future content, please email [nairtl@ucc.ie](mailto:nairtl@ucc.ie)

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