Launch of NAIRTL's 2010 Grants Initiative

Last year’s Grants Initiative saw 37 projects being supported and finances disbursed across eleven Higher Education Institutions in Ireland. The grants initiative aims to enhance the third and fourth level experience by supporting innovative research activities relating to the integration of research, teaching and learning.

Successful projects from previous applications include the development of animations to aid student learning, the implementation of a peer learning programme for students, and the establishment of an undergraduate journal.

Outputs to date from projects funded by this initiative include:
- Learning communities
- Educational CD ROMs
- Use of new technologies in teaching
- Books
- Accredited modules in professional development
- Course handbooks and educational DVDs
- Educational websites, wikis and blogs
- Case studies and classroom resources
- Extensive literature reviews
- Conference papers
- Conferences

Academic staff and researchers within the 38 HEIs aligned with NAIRTL are invited to submit their applications for this year’s grants initiative. It is envisaged that up to thirty small scale projects and eight large scale projects will be funded nationally in 2010.

Application forms and further details are available on www.nairtl.ie/funding, as is a short video outlining the application process. The closing date for receipt of applications by the National Academy is 10th May 2010.

Implementing Bologna in your Institution

With the 2010 deadline fast approaching for alignment with the Bologna Process, the International Summer School in Cork, Ireland offers individuals the opportunity to acquire the strategies and tools required to enable the implementation of Bologna in their institutions. The Summer School will take place in University College Cork, Cork from 5 - 9 July 2010 and will feature an experienced range of presenters addressing topics focused on the Bologna action lines.

Ireland has been very successful in implementing the action lines of the Bologna Process, evidenced by the country’s position at the top of the Bologna Scorecard in 2007, and its second place in 2009. Ireland is also one of the few European countries that has successfully established and implemented a National Qualifications framework. The key people involved in assisting the implementation of Bologna in Ireland such as Dr Declan Kennedy (author of international bestseller Writing and Using Learning Outcomes), Dr Norma Ryan (Irish Bologna expert), Professor Áine Hyland (member of EUA’s Institutional Evaluation Team) and Dr Jim Murray (CEO of National Qualifications Authority of Ireland) amongst others will share their experiences and advise on the best strategies to facilitate effective implementation.

The International Summer School is targeted at policy makers, senior managers, lecturers and educational developers. It is hoped to provide accreditation in terms of ECTS credits for those who complete this course. For further information and to register for the Summer School please go to www.nairtl.ie/summerschool.

Excellence in Teaching Awards 2010

The National Academy has launched its 2010 National Awards for Excellence in Teaching.

The National Awards programme honours exemplary teachers who are also innovative researchers in higher education in Ireland. The awards are intended to recognise teaching accomplishments and to promote public recognition and celebration of the teaching profession.

The 2009 National Excellence in Teaching Awards ceremony was held in Dublin Castle and President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, presided over the event presenting five Awards on behalf of the National Academy.

Nominations are now invited for the 2010 awards from the 38 Higher Education Institutions linked to the National Academy. All levels or categories of staff are eligible for nomination but applicants should not self-nominate.

The nomination form and full details of the awards programme are available at www.nairtl.ie/awards. The closing date for receipt of nominations is 21st May 2010. A video on the awards nomination process featuring Professor Áine Hyland is available to view on the NAIRTL website.
Diary dates

5 March
FACILITATE, the problem-based learning network, will run a one-day workshop entitled Applying Technologies in the Context of Problem-Based Learning in Trinity College Dublin.

This workshop will explore the scope and application of technology within problem-based learning, particularly for the application of analytical, creative and critical thinking skills. The workshop is suitable for lecturers and academic support staff such as educational developers, curriculum developers and teaching assistants involved in supporting problem-based learning initiatives. Details of the event are available at www.facilitate.ie.

25 March
The Irish Educational Documents Volumes I-III are now available in digitised form and can be ordered on CD from the NAIRTL website (www.nairtl.ie/Resources). The development of this publication was sponsored by ScoTENS, the Standing Committee on Teacher Education North and South. The CD will be launched at the Educational Studies Association of Ireland’s annual conference in Dundalk on the evening of March 25th. The conference runs from 25-27 March and is entitled Borders, Boundaries and Identities: Education in Challenging Times. For further details go to www.esai.ie/conference.

10-11 June
The theme of the 8th annual Galway Symposium is Creative thinking: re-imagining the University. Abstracts are invited on topics including:

• novel approaches to curricular design
• constraints and opportunities in developing new curricula and structures
• innovative approaches to teaching and the fostering of active learning
• role of creativity in teaching, learning and research
• nurturing creativity in students
• imaginative approaches to the student learning experience
• creativity myths and reality

Further information is available at: www.nuigalway.ie/celt/conference/conference 2010.html.

2nd Symposium on Education for Health

Convened by UCC’s School of Medicine and funded by NAIRTL, the symposium attracted 70 delegates to Cork in early January. The theme of the symposium was Assessment: the big questions, some answers and keynote speakers included experts from the UK and Ireland. The student voice was also apparent with a number of presentations from UCC students including Ian Geraghty, Jackie Moloney, Sarah Jane Kelleher, Lisa Kavanagh and Caroline Levis.

This was the 2nd symposium in the Education for Health series and it was approved for 6 credits for Continuing Medical Education (CME) by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.

Supporting Supervisors

The first stage of the delivery of materials and training to support research supervisors is almost complete in the NAIRTL partner institutions.

The supervisor’s folder, a key resource for those participating in the workshops, has been finalised. This folder contains national and international guidelines and codes of practice relating to the supervision of postgraduate research students, as well as the institutional specific forms that a supervisor might require.

Feedback from participants in the workshops has been very positive and the materials and workshop content will be revised based on comments from participants.

Professional Development

NAIRTL’s Project Manager, Jennifer Murphy, has been invited to present at an exploratory workshop focused on the Impact of Academic Professional Development for Teachers in Higher Education.

This three day event will take place in Bratislava, Slovakia, commencing on March 18. The workshop will bring together a range of professionals engaged in the delivery of professional development programmes within HEIs, as well as academics researching teaching, learning and assessment.

The workshop builds on preliminary results of parallel initiatives such as the EU-funded project on professional standards for HE teachers. It is expected that the meeting will result in a research proposal examining the impact of academic professional development programmes on faculty development.

Attract National attention!

Academic and administrative staff working in Higher Education in Ireland are invited to submit their events for publication on the National Academy’s website. For the first time, all activities relating to the integration of research, teaching and learning will be showcased collectively to highlight the level of activity and expertise in this area nationally.

About NAIRTL

NAIRTL is funded by the HEA Strategic Innovation Fund. For details regarding any of our events or activities, please refer to our website.

Please contact us if you wish to highlight a relevant research project or initiative in the National Academy newsletter or make suggestions for future content.

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