

Early career researcher support needs urgent attention, Workshop hears

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Researchers face a wide range of issues that have been neglected for years but are now being acknowledged and addressed by relevant authorities due to work and pressure by the Irish Federation of University Teachers (IFUT).

Addressing a workshop on Early Career Research Support in the Royal Irish Academy on Monday November 19th, Frank Jones, Deputy General Secretary of IFUT, said that issues such as gender inequality, precarious employment contracts, work/life balance, employment contracts, excessive workloads, career structure, pay, stable employment, training and supports are all issues that need to be improved.

"When these issues exist in combination, as is often the case, then career progression for researchers becomes extremely difficult indeed. These are issues that can be fully and adequately addressed only as a result of researchers becoming organised in a trade union and through their collective action and initiatives," Frank Jones said.

Progress is finally occurring. Work is being undertaken by the Irish Universities Association (IUA) and the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) to develop a Researchers Career Framework. IFUT is working and maintaining close involvement with IUA and THEA to ensure that the Career Framework addresses the many issues identified at the meeting.

The matter will be further addressed by IFUT's Researchers' Committee at its meeting later this week, including a review of the recently published RIA's Early Career Researcher Support Scoping Project findings.

The RIA workshop was convened to discuss *'the perceptions and experiences of early career researchers in higher education institutions on the island of Ireland'* with a keynote address by Prof. Lynn McAlpine, Professor Emerita of Higher Education Development at University of Oxford and McGill University.

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