Ollscoil Mhá Nuad
Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad

2023

MU School of Business

Advice for Early Career Researchers, from some of our female faculty members.

Introduction

Prof Eeva Leinonen, President, Maynooth University

It is often said that a PhD is the pinnacle of higher education achievement. PhD graduates make a significant contribution to society, driving innovation, acting as thought leaders, and supporting a more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable society.

It is a great privilege to undertake the intellectual challenge of a PhD journey. It offers the time to think deeply about things that matter – to you, your community, and society. My own PhD has allowed me to travel the world and shape the future of universities. Most importantly, my research work endeavoured to improve the lives of children and young adults with autistic spectrum disorders.

The PhD can, however, be daunting and sometimes a lonely experience. Forging a supportive network and leaning on the experience of others can sustain you on this journey, which can feel like a marathon but is not a race. Building the support structures around you, particularly in the spirit of International Women's Day, with female faculty members of Maynooth University's School of Business is a worthwhile endeavour. This booklet offers a five-minute read of good advice that you can draw upon.

If I could give you a piece of advice from my own experience, it would be to seize the opportunities presented to you, build a network to foster the resilience you need to complete this intellectual challenge, and reach out for help when you need it.

Maynooth University is a wonderful place to learn and grow and I wish you great success and personal fulfilment in your PhD studies.

With best wishes,

Professor Eeva Leinonen
Maynooth University

IWD 2023: Dr. Marian Crowley-Henry

Tip:

"Write early and regularly: it helps to keep focus, to provide clarity to your thoughts, and is a tangible output of your research efforts."

Marian is an Associate Professor in Organisational Behaviour and Human Resource Management at Maynooth University's School of Business. Marian's research interests are in the areas of careers, migration and identity. She publishes in international peer-reviewed journals and regularly shares her research at national and international conferences.

IWD 2023: Dr. Adele Smith - Auchmuty

Adele is Assistant Professor, and lectures in International Business and Corporate Entrepreneurship. Before joining Maynooth University, she was the Registrar at Galway Business School and an Associate Lecturer at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Tip:

"Carefully choose a research area that enthuses you and one that you believe your research will insightfully impact. Let your work build on mindmaps, sketch a plan, and focus clearly on the objective.

Set attainable goals, and don't be afraid to change your direction as your research career evolves. Avoid a lonely journey, build your network and connect with others on the same route as you travel through!"

IWD 2023: Dr. Nada Elnahla

Nada joined Maynooth University in 2022 as a Lecturer/Assistant Professor. Her previous academic appointments were as an Instructor of Marketing at Carleton University (Canada) and as an Assistant Professor of English Literature at Alexandria University (Egypt).

Tip:

Although navigating academia might be challenging and time-consuming, two keys to success are choosing a research topic that you are really passionate about and remembering to take time for yourself.

IWD 2023: Dr Jean Cushen

Jean is an Associate Professor of HRM and serves as Deputy Head of School with responsibility for Accreditation; having previously held the role of 'Academic Director Postgraduate Teaching and Learning'.

Jean's research explores the contemporary employment experience focusing on financialization, the labour process and human resource management (HRM).

Tip:

Make time to develop and maintain relationships with industry and practice, they are a great sounding board for ideas and for engaged research.

IWD 2023: Dr Bridget McNally

Tip:

"Set yourself realistic goals for each semester/academic year - monitor your own progress against these goals and don't get diverted except for very good reason - this will help keep structure and focus to your work. Be kind to yourself and don't forget to congratulate yourself from time to time!"

Bridget qualified as a chartered accountant in 1985 and as a member of the Irish Tax Institute in 1987. Post qualification, she worked in professional practice as a taxation consultant with Arthur Andersen & Co. and in 1991 moved to Irish Life & Permanent Plc, where she subsequently became head of group tax.

In 2020, she was appointed as Associate Professor in Accounting and as one of the Deputy Heads of the School of Business, Maynooth University.

IWD 2023: Dr Gillian Moran

Gillian is an Assistant Professor in Marketing. Gillian's research interests include social media-based communications (B2C, C2C, C2B/G), influencer marketing, online word of mouth (eWOM), and online engagement. Her research has been published in the Journal of Advertising Research, Journal of Marketing Communications, Journal of Product and Brand Management and presented at national and international conferences.

Tip:

"The PhD can be a lonely journey, but you don't need to do it alone! Having a good support network within the PhD community is vital to bounce ideas off, work through challenges and maintain your research enthusiasm. Build your networks, attend doctoral colloquiums/seminars and engage with fellow PhD students, they will be a great source of support now and throughout your careers."

IWD 2023: Dr Tatiana Andreeva

Tatiana is Associate Professor in Management and Organisational Behaviour. She also serves as Research Director in the School of Business.

Tatiana's research focuses on the intersections of knowledge management, organisational behaviour and human resource management. Her research has been published in journals such as Human Resource Management Journal, Journal of World Business, among others.

"1) Focus on the research topic that you are really passionate about. The PhD journey is several years of your life, you will feel happier if you invest them in something that you are passionate about.

2) Start your research project with a real-life problem (not with a gap in the literature). This will help you to develop a project that is meaningful and relevant for others - which is always inspiring. Literature gaps will come after."

IWD 2023: Dr Olga Ryazanova

Olga is a Lecturer in Management in the Maynooth University School of Business, and Associate Dean for Strategy and Governance, Faculty of Social Sciences. Olga's research explores micro-level antecedents of strategic human capital formation in knowledge-intensive industries, with the particular focus on the role of globalisation in this process.

Her research has received multiple awards from the Global Forum Award of the MED division of the Academy of Management and has been published in top academic journals.

Olga currently serves as an Associate Editor for the Academy of Management Learning & Education journal.

Tip:

> Remember that failure is a normal part of life in academia. Everyone fails, all the time. Full professors with thousands of citations get their papers rejected by journals. When someone wins a multi-million euro grant, this is usually after many failed applications. Resilience and persistence are the most important capabilities for an academic. Just keep working on the projects that you find interesting, and learn from your mistakes. It's a long game.

IWD 2023: Dr Gail Sheppard

Gail is an Assistant Professor of Accounting at Maynooth University School of Business and Director of Arts Accounting, having previously been a Lecturer in Accounting at TU Dublin.

Gail's research is multidisciplinary, focusing on public resource management and encompassing Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in Ireland and Covid-19 management.

Gail has written and published a textbook in the area of Management Accounting.

She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, a former council member of the Irish Accounting and Finance Association and an external examiner for Atlantic Technological University (ATU).

Tip:

"My advice is to try to get your research published as soon as you can. Perhaps publish your research initially in an industry magazine, a news outlet blog or even twitter and build it up to an academic publication. There is nothing like walking into your Viva knowing that part of your PhD has been peer-reviewed and published already!"

IWD 2023: Dr Nicola Mountford

Nicola is a Lecturer in Management and PhD Director at the School of Business. Nicola's research interests are in the public organization of markets, in particular through the use of inter-organizational networks.

Much of her research has focused on the re-organization of the healthcare market in response to the increasing pervasiveness of technology, and she held a Fulbright TechImpact Scholar award in the area of eHealth.

Tip:

"Maintaining balance is all important - between seeing opportunities and staying on track; between building networks and making individual progress; between confidence and questioning. Try to stay consistently balanced rather than straying to the extremes."

Afterword

Prof. Audra Mockaitis
Full Professor, International Business
Associate Dean of Research and Engagement, Faculty of Social Sciences

Although some progress has been made in gender equality in academia since I was a PhD student, there is still a long way to go in plugging the leaky pipeline. This is evident in some countries more than others. Female PhD students and ECRs should be mindful of the challenges (and stereotypes) that can hold them back, but it doesn't mean they can't be overcome.

One of my most important bits of advice is to learn to manage your time and to set boundaries. Academics spend a lot of time on various activities that aren't counted (e.g., replying to emails, writing drafts, providing pastoral care to students). In addition, much of the service work we do is invisible, and much of the invisible work tends to be taken on by females. Be cautious about what extra work you accept, learn to manage your time, and importantly, learn to say "No" to things that won't necessarily help you to achieve your goals. Women tend to get asked to do more invisible academic caring (or "housekeeping") work. Be strategic in your choices.

Also, don't try to latch onto every opportunity that comes your way, but do find several different groups of collaborators that can help you to reach your goals, including a good mentor. That said, don't get into the habit of saying "no" either. Good mentors will provide you with opportunities that will help shape your career, so take advantage of those opportunities when they are offered (don't burn any bridges early in your career). You don't need to do "everything", even though you might be pressured to. A few top-notch publications are better than an endless list of papers in low-ranked journals.

Finally, try to have some semblance of a life outside of work. As difficult as it is to forge a career in this industry, if you are careful about how you divide your time, you can still have time for yourself (and your family).

Thank you

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