

Festival of PhD Research: Enhancing Research Culture

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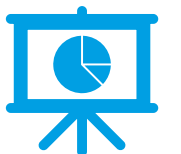


Introduction

The Festival of PhD Research is an annual event (2018-2025) showcasing and celebrating PhD research across all disciplines and campuses at Ulster University, featuring diverse presentation formats, competitions, and networking opportunities.

Rationale for Initiative: To address the need for a more collaborative, supportive, and visible research culture among PhD Researchers at Ulster University, aligning with the University Research Strategy and the Concordat's Environment and Culture principle.

Results



- Over 300 PGRs participating annually by 2024
- National success in 3MT® competition (UK People's Choice Award 2019, 2022, 2024)
- Enhanced cross-disciplinary networking and collaboration
- Improved research communication skills among participants
- Strengthened sense of research community
- Increased visibility of PhD research within the university and beyond
- Shortlisted for UK Vitae Award for Enhancing Research Culture Through Researcher Development (2023)
- Ranked 4th in UK for Research Culture (PRES 2023)



'Learning about other areas of research in different formats making participation accessible for all researchers at every stage of research'



'Very successful in bringing together students from different faculties, disciplines and research interests within the UU Great opportunity to understand how to better present my work to a variety of audiences'

'Opportunity to see cross section of the research activity taking place across UU. No other activity enables us to do this'

Aims



- Showcase and celebrate PhD excellence at Ulster
- Foster cross-disciplinary collaboration and community
- Enhance and support the PhD Researcher experience
- Increase visibility of PhD research
- Inclusive, accessible platform for PhD Researchers
- Develop research communication skills
- Supportive environment to share their work
- Reinforce UU strategic research priorities
- Partnerships with academic colleagues

Conclusion



The Ulster Festival of PhD Research has significantly transformed the research culture at Ulster University, creating a more vibrant, inclusive, and supportive environment for PGRs. This initiative demonstrates how targeted researcher development activities can enhance the overall research ecosystem, providing a model to enhance research culture.

Methods



- Interdisciplinary programme of presentations
- Multiple formats of delivery
- Dedicated Festival website
- Co-creation with PhD Festival Committee volunteers
- Exhibitions from practice-based PGRs
- Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) competition
- Bake Your PhD competition
- Photography competition
- Social and networking opportunities
- Inclusion of broader academic community
- PGR led events through Doctoral Societies
- Awards and Prizes
- Awards Presentation Event and 3MT® Final

