Walsh Scholars of the Year

Application Support Webinar | 16 July 2020

Erin O'Rourke | Walsh Scholarships Development Officer

The History

Since the early days of the Walsh Scholarships Programme (formally Fellowships), there has been an annual seminar where final year PhD students present their project and a chosen Scholar is awarded a gold medal.

[Past gold medal winners](#) have gone on to hold leading positions in research, academia and industry, nationally and internationally, and for which they credit the Programme as the launching pad for their careers.

- 2006-2018 an annual Walsh Scholars Seminar held in the RDS (Royal Dublin Society)

- 2019 four programme events held at Teagasc Research Centres, with winner of each programme event presenting at a Seminar held in Teagasc Ashtown

The need for change…

The old process

- Evaluated the Scholars on an abstract and oral presentation only

The past event

- Internal attendance at the Seminar has declined

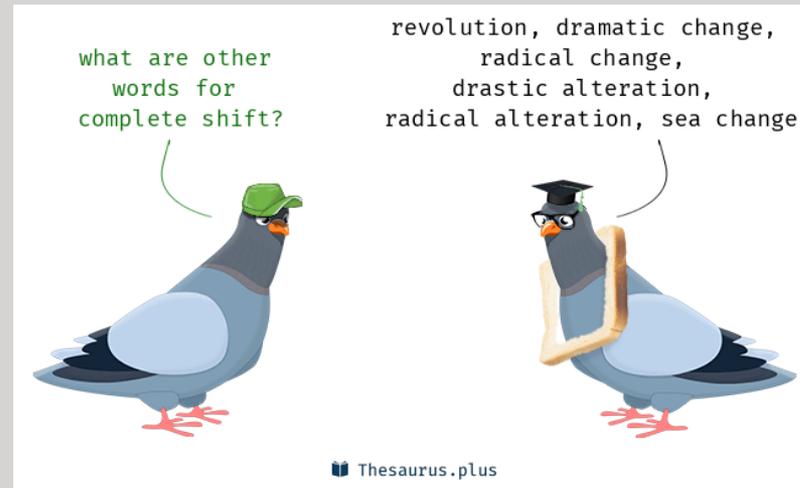- Encouraging an external audience to attend has been difficult

  ...All about an event less about the process

- *Director, Director for Research and the Walsh Scholarships Programme Development Committee expressed the need for the competition to change*

Needs to be more encompassing in its evaluation of a Scholar's research study achievements and overall development as an early stage researcher.

Need for the competition to be rigorous in its selection of high performing Scholars and for award criteria and process to reflect the prestige of being a finalist and ultimately winning the award.

Teagasc
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

W
WALSH SCHOLARSHIPS
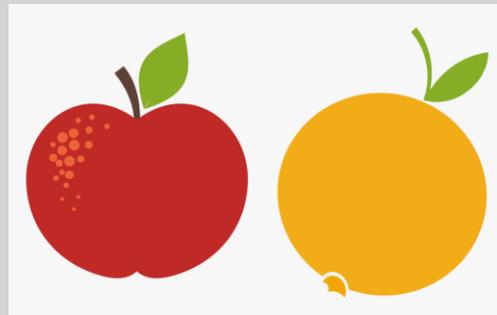PROGRAMME

Walsh Scholars of the Year

From 2020 onward, the competition will evaluate Scholars on

five key **competencies**,

in a three **step** process,

ending with a public **showcase**.

Medals awarded

- Several

- Research Programme winners - 4

- Walsh Scholarships Programme stream winners

  – The Walsh Scholar PhD Gold Medal **(the only award of the three to be termed 'Gold Medal')**

  – The Walsh Scholar Research Master's Student of the Year (NOT IN 2020)

  – The Knowledge Transfer Master's Student of the Year

- Knowledge Transfer Directorate continue with existing process and annual event (Knowledge Transfer Conference) to select their Student of the Year.

Competencies

- Five key **competencies**

  1. *Discipline specific scientific and technical expertise*

  2. *Industry-relevant transferable skills*

  3. *Behavioural competencies*

  4. *Interdisciplinary and intersectoral knowledge*

  5. *Career development planning*

- Competencies that are fundamental to European research student training and development best practice.

- *'The Seven Principles of Innovative Doctoral Training' of the European Commission and The 'Salzburg II Recommendations' authored by the European Universities' Association.*

Steps

1. **<u>Written Application</u>**
- Final year (or nearing) research students invited to complete a written application.
- Opens Fri 17th July, closes Fri 21st August

2. **Review of applications**
- Applications reviewed by Research Programme. Review panels, formed and chaired by Heads of Programmes, select a shortlist of finalists.
- Mon 7th to Thurs 10th Sept (tbc)

3. **Finalists interviewed**
- Shortlisted applicants interviewed by external figures from academia and industry
- Mon 5th to Thurs 8th Oct (tbc)

Showcase

Walsh Scholars: The Next Generation

…. a public showcase of Teagasc's leading postgraduate agri-food research

- Save the date: Thursday 5th November 2020
- Timing: 11 am to 12.30 pm (tbc)
- Event type: online broadcast
- Register: https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/walsh-scholars-the-next-generation-tickets-112792290778

STEP 1: Written applications

Focuses on 5 key areas:

1. Description of the research (abstract) including (potential or realised) impact

2. Project achievements/outputs to-date

3. Development of technical, transferable and behavioural skills

4. Demonstrated potential to become a research leader

5. Commitment and ability to communicate the research with peers and the public

STEP 1: Written applications

- *Rigorous and fair*

- *Gives Scholars the practise of a written evaluation, with a deadline, detailing their research and skillset*

- *A similar activity to what Scholars will experience when applying for jobs, funding and other awards*

- *Widens the basis on which Scholars are judged. Previously abstract and oral presentation only*

- *Evaluate Scholars':*

  1. *Discipline specific scientific and technical expertise*

  2. *Industry relevant transferable skills*

  3. *Behavioural competencies*

STEP 2: Review of application by Research Programme

- Applications reviewed by Research Programme

- Review panel:

  – Head of Programme (Chair with final say)

  – An alum from the Research Programme (identified by the HoP)

  – A Walsh Scholarships Mentor and/or a Walsh Scholarships Programme Development Committee member

  – A (early-stage) Postdoctoral researcher from the Programme area (the activity can be part of the postdoc's annual development plan)

  – A member of Teagasc Sci Comms Committee

STEP 2: Review of application by Research Programme

- Panel formed by the HoP

- All Programme level applications, and a score sheet for marking, provided to each Research Programme panel member

- Each Research Programme panel meets to compile scores and select:

    1. PhD finalists

    2. Master's finalists (NOT IN 2020)

STEP 2: Review of application by Research Programme

- *Rigorous and fair*

- *HoP as Chair – more Scholars, encouraged by their supervisor, will make an application*

- *Involves the expertise and vested interest of two organisation-wide committees*

STEP 3: Shortlisted applicants interviewed by external figures

- Finalists invited to interview

- Present research in 3 minutes with 5-7 minutes for questions (timings tbc)

- Scholars marked on presentation and 2-3 key competencies

  4. Interdisciplinary and intersectoral knowledge

  5. Career development planning

- Scholars achieving the highest mark selected as Research Programme winners and an overall PhD Gold Medal winner and Research Master's Student of the Year (NOT IN 2020).

STEP 3: Shortlisted applicants interviewed by external figures

- Interviewer panel formed by Director for Research

- Finalists recorded at interview or post interview, with content:

  – used to promote the upcoming Showcase on social media

  – played at the Showcase

  – used to mark being a finalist in the given year

  – used to promote the Walsh Scholarships Programme nationally and internationally through existing and new channels.

Due to Covid19 restrictions some or all Scholars who reach this stage may be interviewed via Zoom and may also be asked to make their own video.

STEP 3: Shortlisted applicants interviewed by external figures

- *Rigorous and fair*

- *Gives finalists opportunity of an interview with external senior figures*

- *Give finalists opportunity to demonstrate communication skills*

- *Fosters relationships between the Walsh Scholarships Programme and existing or new stakeholders - universities, research institutes, industry, NGOs, policymakers, regulators*

- *Potentially involves the Alum Award winner*

Showcase

Walsh Scholars: The Next Generation

…. a public showcase of Teagasc's leading postgraduate agri-food research

- Save the date: Thursday 5th November 2020
- Timing: 11 am to 12.30 pm (tbc)
- Event type: online broadcast
- Register: https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/walsh-scholars-the-next-generation-tickets-112792290778

Showcase

Walsh Scholars: The Next Generation

…. a public showcase of Teagasc's leading postgraduate agri-food research

- Host: Sharon Ní Bheoláin

- Immerse yourself in fascinating studies by some of the next generation of food and farming leaders, including our Walsh Scholars of the Year
- Meet the Walsh Scholar Alum Award Winner 2020 and find out what being a graduate of the Programme has meant to them
- Explore Teagasc's proud history of graduate training and development
- Learn how the prestige Programme contributes to shaping innovations in agricultural research, education and advisory

Written Application

https://www.teagasc.ie/about/research--innovation/postgraduate-scholarships/walsh-scholars-of-the-year/
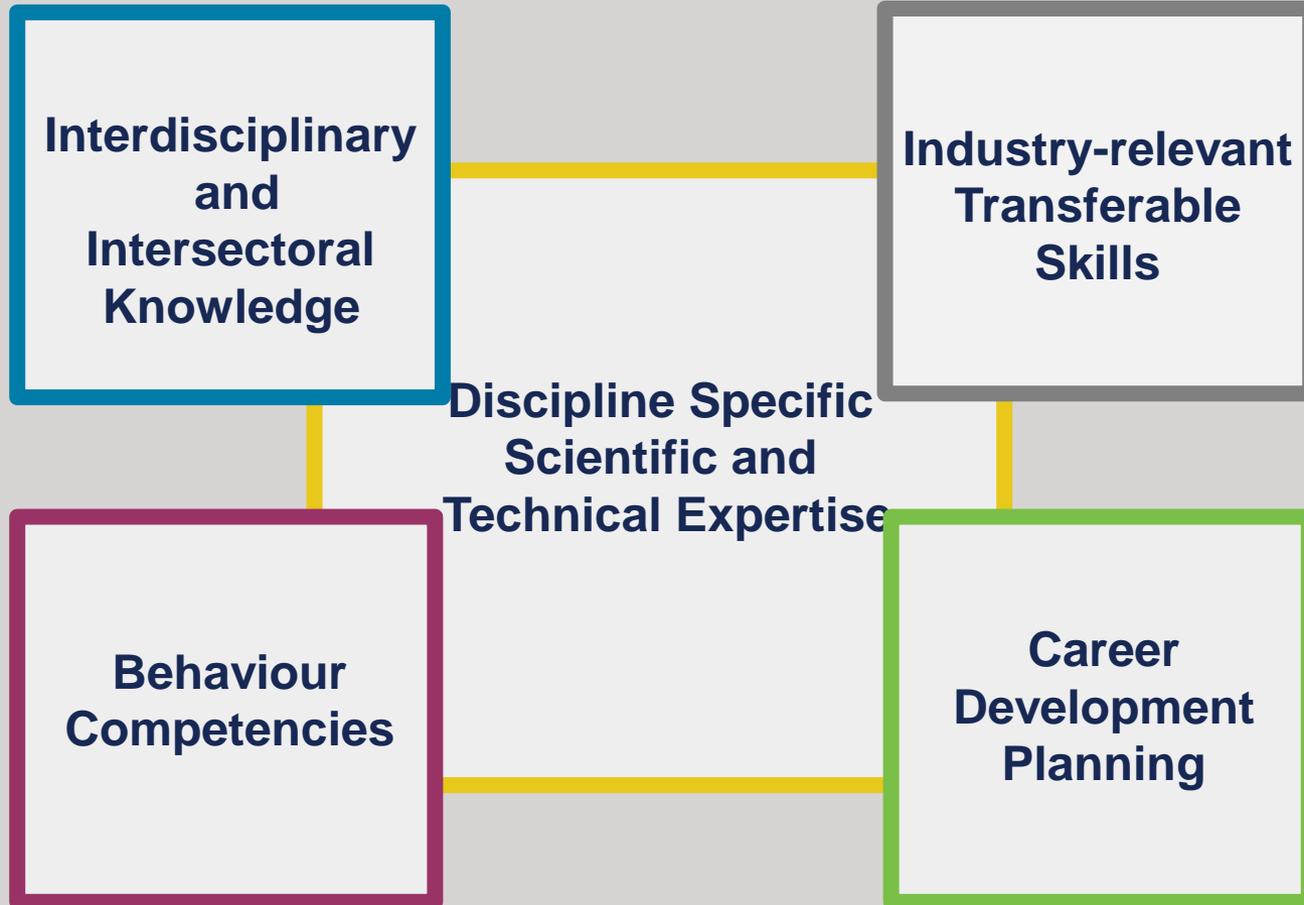
From Friday 17 July (tomorrow), downloadable
- Application
- Support documents

Applications to be sent, by deadline, to walshscholarships@teagasc.ie

Competencies
research student training and development

Competencies
research student training and development

- Holistic understanding

- 'Hot Topics'

- Peer learning

- Networking

- Workplace rotations with industry and other relevant sectors

Interdisciplinary and Intersectoral knowledge

Competencies
research student training and development

- 'Soft' skills

- Teamwork

- Accountability

- Flexibility

- Critical/lateral thinking

- Respect and understanding of others

- Experience of the workplace

Behaviour Competencies

Competencies
research student training and development

Industry-relevant Transferable Skills

- Statistics

- Information literacy

- Technical & proposal writing

- Innovation and entrepreneurship

- Patenting and intellectual property

- Business development and commercialisation

- Communication and engagement

- Project/time management

Career Development Planning

- Guidance

- Mentorship

- Reflective practice for understanding of aptitudes