

Title: What determines success in research? A personal perspective.

Bio: John Quinn did a BSc in Zoology at UCD and an MSc in Biological Computation at York. In 1996, at the age of 30, he started his PhD on the ecology of geese in Arctic Siberia at the University of Oxford. He stayed on in Oxford for two postdocs and Lectureships in the Department of Zoology and Pembroke College. John moved to the School of BEES at UCC in 2012 to take up a Lectureship in Ecology and was awarded an ERC Consolidator Grant in 2014. His current interests include the evolution of behaviour in wild animals, the ecology of seabirds, and predator-prey interactions.

Abstract: John will reflect on his own experience in academia, contemplating the factors that have contributed to his own success, and that of others with whom he has worked closely. Understanding what constitutes cutting edge research and learning how to sell one's research to a wide audience are key. Somewhat ironically, the kinds of individual qualities that determine Darwinian fitness in the animal populations he studies – for example cognitive ability, competitive ability, sociability, and a dash of luck – all play a role in determining research success. For many, perseverance is perhaps the most important individual factor of all.