

Graduate School Conference

Live Well, Learn Well

Providing Insights to Health and Resilience Within
Postgraduate Study

28th February 2025

11.30am - 4.30pm

The Thomas J Moran Graduate School

Welcome

We are delighted to announce our second Graduate School Conference of this academic year, which will take place on Friday 28th February, starting at 11.30am, at the Thomas J. Moran Graduate School.

This interdisciplinary event is open to PGT and PGR students. Centred on the theme of 'Live Well, Learn Well', it will bring together internal staff, external experts, and showcase leading-edge research and personal experiences from our talented postgraduate students.

Professor Colin McCoy and Katy Madden



Professor Colin McCoy

Dean of the Thomas J. Moran Graduate School, Professor Colin McCoy will open the conference. Colin has more than 25 years of research expertise in the development of systems to improve the performance of biomaterials, particularly medical devices. As Dean of the Graduate School, he provides academic leadership and strategic direction and support for postgraduate matters across Queen's.



Katy Madden

Katy Madden, Head of Postgraduate Student Services at Queen's, will close the conference. With extensive experience in student services and academic support, Katy leads initiatives to enhance the academic success and campus experience of postgraduate students. Her leadership focuses on fostering collaboration and contributing to the overall strategic direction of student support services at Queen's.

Itinerary

11.30 - 12.15	Student Registration and Networking Lunch
12.15 - 12.30	Welcome and Introduction Professor Colin McCoy, Dean of the Thomas J Moran Graduate School, Queen's University Belfast.
12.30 - 14.00	Keynote Speaker: Provoking Thought Hugh Roarty, Project Worker, Action Mental Health .
14.00 - 14.15	Tea/Coffee Break
14.15 - 14.20	Delegates Move to Break Out Rooms
14.20 - 15.20	Breakout Sessions as Below:
Breakout No.1 (TR7)	Plant-Based Diets and Flavonoids: A Path to Sustained Health and Well-Being Dr Alysha Thompson, Research Fellow, Co-Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, Queen's University Belfast.
Breakout No. 2 (TR6)	The Science of Emotional Wellbeing Dr Karen Galway, Senior Lecturer in Mental Health in the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Queen's University Belfast.
Breakout No. 3 (TR2)	The Importance of Emotional Resilience in Postgraduate Study Neil Whiteside, Training and Development Consultant, Queen's University Belfast.
15.20 - 15.30	Delegates Move to Break Out Rooms
15.30 - 16.15	Wellbeing Research, Personal Insights and Innovative Approaches Led by Postgraduate Students at Queen's University Belfast. Details of Speakers and Topics can be Found Below.
16.15 - 16.25	Student Support at Queen's Megan O'Brien, Postgraduate Wellbeing Adviser at Queen's University Belfast.
16.25 - 16.30	Closing Remarks Katy Madden, Head of Postgraduate Student Services, the Thomas J Moran Graduate School, Queen's University Belfast.

Breakout Rooms

15.30 - 16.15 Wellbeing Research, Personal Insights and Innovative Approaches from QUB Postgraduates

Personal Insights and Recommendations (TR7)

Presentation 1: Balancing Life and Studies: Strategies for Mental Well-Being as a PGT Student, with Angel Jacob.

Presentation 2: The Inattentive Nursing Student, with Erin Bowman.

Presentation 3: Leveraging Behaviour Change Theory to Enhance Personal Health and Wellbeing During PhD Studies, with Hazel Haworth.

Wellbeing Research 1 (TR6)

Presentation 1: An Acceptability and Feasibility Study Comparing the Butterfly Hug / Safe Calm Place Technique to Tetris: Can Either Method Successfully Minimise Post-traumatic Stress Symptoms of Preterm Parents in the Neonatal Unit? with Victoria Craig.

Presentation 2: Navigating Emotional Wellbeing in Qualitative Research – Insights for Emerging Researchers in Arts and Social Sciences, with Kristyna Ilek.

Presentation 3: Is my Mental Health Protected in the Workplace? with Janine Geddis.

Wellbeing Research 2 (TR5)

Presentation 1: Mindfulness Through Kenosis as an Informed Social Processes in the Effective Adaptation of Desires and Feeling of Emptiness Among College Students, with Merin Saji.

Presentation 2: Stories That Nourish, with Jan King.

Innovative Approaches to Wellbeing (TR2)

Presentation 1: MenstroSync: An AI-Powered Solution for Menstrual Health, Mental Well-Being, and Academic Productivity, with Krupali Shankar Thakur.

Presentation 2: Resilience and Burnout: A Gameplay, Solution-Focused Approach for Software Practitioners, with Michael Sampson.

Presentation 3: Tools Readily at Hand: A Tangible Toolkit to Scaffold Self-Tracking for Creative Mental Wellbeing Support, with Jingxin Yu.

Presentations



Keynote Speaker: Provoking Thought

Our keynote speaker for this conference is Hugh Roarty from [Action Mental Health](#). In this Action Mental Health session, ‘Provoking Thought’, Hugh will look at how we can continue to break down the barriers of stigma around mental health in our society in 2025, and improve our own wellbeing and resilience skills.



Plant-Based Diets and Flavonoids: A Path to Sustained Health and Well-Being

Dr Alysha Thompson discusses the role of plant-based diets and flavonoids in promoting health. She will explore how components of plant-based diets contribute to disease prevention, and emerging research into their potential influence on psychological well-being, as well as strategies for making nutritious, sustainable dietary choices.



The Science of Emotional Wellbeing

Dr Karen Galway will address one of life’s taboos: emotional wellbeing. We are moving into an age of enlightenment, where “it’s ok not to be ok” and therefore the stigma associated with mental health and wellbeing is dissolving. This interactive workshop will provide practical knowledge and awareness regarding the impact of daily living on our mental wellbeing. You will gain some tools and tricks to help you maintain good mental health.



The Importance of Emotional Resilience in Postgraduate Study

Almost all postgraduate students will experience tough situations during their studies. Resilience is what helps you overcome these and develop in the future. People are not born with resilience; it is a skill. In this session, Neil Whiteside will provide insight into resilience and learn useful strategies to help you cope with the pressures of being a postgraduate student.



Student Support at Queen’s

Megan O’Brien will promote the wellbeing support and services available to Queen’s students. These include the drop-in service, the counselling service, wellbeing events, individual wellbeing appointments, and the support of student ambassadors

Speakers



Hugh Roarty

Hugh Roarty has over 13 years of experience delivering various training programs around mental health awareness, personal wellbeing and resilience and suicide prevention. His responsibilities include updating and delivering training to young people, adults and key contacts regarding mental health promotion and personal wellbeing and resilience training, with the aim of developing their awareness, knowledge and understanding.



Dr Alysha Thompson

Dr Alysha Thompson is a Research Fellow at the Co-Centre for Sustainable Food Systems within the Institute for Global Food Security at Queen's University Belfast. She is a qualified nutritionist and holds an MSci degree in Food Science and Nutrition from Queen's University Belfast. She recently completed her PhD in Nutritional Epidemiology, where her research focused on plant-based diets and their role in chronic disease risk.



Dr Karen Galway

Dr Karen Galway is a Senior Lecturer in Mental Health in the School of Nursing and Midwifery at Queen's University Belfast. Her research experience spans public, voluntary and academic sectors, and fields of psychology, public health, epidemiology, nursing and mental health. She has published over 50 peer reviewed papers, reports and policy reviews on public mental health, mental health promotion and suicide prevention.



Neil Whiteside

Neil Whiteside is a training and development consultant with over seven years of experience in the education sector. He has delivered business and management courses at all levels, and has experience delivering in secondary, further, and higher education. Neil studied business and management at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.



Megan O'Brien

Megan O'Brien has over thirty year's experience in support, information, advice and guidance through youth work and community groups, probation project work and with disability organisations. Megan has been working with postgraduate students as a wellbeing adviser since April 2021, including Masters and PhD students, individual schools, faculties and the Graduate School.

Discover more and book your place on the [Graduate School website](#). Please email pg.skills@qub.ac.uk should you require additional support during the conference.