



British Council Ireland

# A Year in Pictures 2023-2024



The British Council supports peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide

## British Council

We work on behalf of the UK and its four nations to champion its world-leading cultural and educational institutions and boost the UK's international reputation. Our approach, based on mutuality and partnership strengthens the UK's leadership on international development and at the forefront of addressing global issues.

- We work directly with individuals to help them gain the skills, confidence and connections to transform their lives and shape a better world in partnership with the UK. We support them to build networks and explore creative ideas, to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications.
- We work with governments and our partners in the education, English language and cultural sectors, in the UK and globally. Working together we make a bigger difference, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world.
- We work with people in over 200 countries and territories and are on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2022–23 we reached 600 million people.



## British Council Ireland

British Council Ireland was first established in 1955 to provide welfare support for Commonwealth students at Irish universities. In 1989, the office was refocused to a broader range of cultural relation activities that brokers relationships between Ireland and the UK in arts and culture, higher education, non-formal education, English and exams.

British Council Ireland consists of a local and global team. The local team works on a Cultural Engagement (Arts and Education) programme in-country. Global colleagues are based in Ireland but work on bilateral activities internationally.

# British Council Ireland contact details

## Local Team:

Country Director **Dr Kerry McCall Magan**

✉ [Kerry.McCallMagan@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Kerry.McCallMagan@britishcouncil.org)

Project Manager **Aoife Ward**

✉ [Aoife.Ward@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Aoife.Ward@britishcouncil.org)

Project Coordinator **Sorcha Kebbe**

✉ [Sorcha.Kebbe@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Sorcha.Kebbe@britishcouncil.org)

## Global Colleagues in Ireland:

Director English Language Research **Prof Barry O'Sullivan**

✉ [Barry.OSullivan@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Barry.OSullivan@britishcouncil.org)

Education Strategy and Special Projects Lead **John McNamara**

✉ [John.McNamara@britishcouncil.org](mailto:John.McNamara@britishcouncil.org)

Senior Speaking Examiner Operations Manager **Hannah Sassi**

✉ [Hannah.Sassi@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Hannah.Sassi@britishcouncil.org)

IELTS OSM Examiner Standards Manager **Mark MacColl**

✉ [Mark.MacColl@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Mark.MacColl@britishcouncil.org)

✉ [info@ie.britishcouncil.org](mailto:info@ie.britishcouncil.org) | ✉ [@ieBritish](https://twitter.com/ieBritish)

📘 [BritishCouncilIreland](https://www.britishcouncilireland.org/) | 🌐 [britishcouncil.ie](https://www.britishcouncil.ie)

📍 Newmount House, 22/24 Lower Mount Street, Dublin 2, D02Y759,  
Ireland.



# Overview of Activities

This overview covers activities in the period, April 2023 to March 2024.

It has been arranged in our key sectors of activity:

- **Arts and Culture**
- **Higher Education**
- **Non-Formal Education**

It also includes an information on our activities in English and Exams.





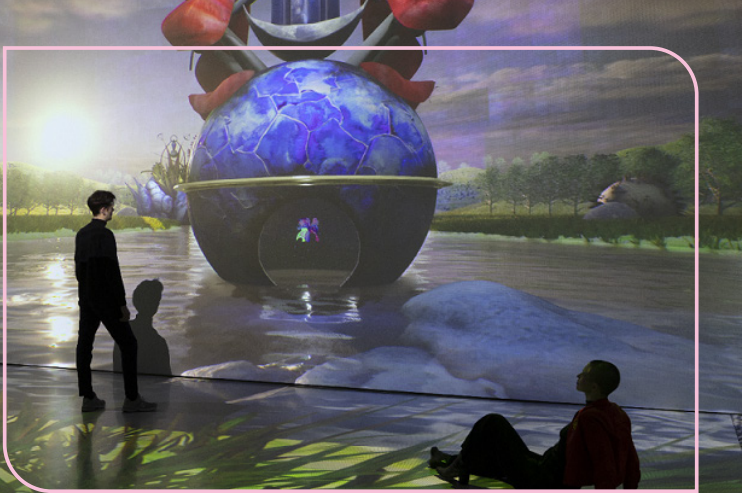
## Culture Connects

British Council's Culture Connects programme supports UK cultural professionals and organisations connect with their counterparts in Ireland through networking, collaboration, showcasing, and touring. It aims to build knowledge of the local creative industries sector while sharing digital arts packages with key stakeholders.

The main strands of Culture Connects activity in Ireland are:

- **Cultural professionals brokering and connecting**
- **Showcasing and touring**
- **Creative collaboration**
- **Scoping and research**
- **Digital showcasing**

The following page highlights some of the exciting activity in Culture Connects in Ireland in the last 12 months.



## Connecting Cultural Professionals

### Otolith, Galway, April – May 2023

We supported Otolith in the development phase of [A Sphere Of Water Orbiting A Star](#), an immersive audio visual environment created for the Galway Arts Centre. Co-commissioned by Galway Arts Centre and Hangar Artistic Research Centre, Lisbon, this work contained moving image, audio, performances and installations created as a guide to the imagination, through the sonic portal of Drexciya.

### National Sculpture Factory, Cork, August 2023

[CLAY holding/transforming/performing](#) was held at the National Sculpture Factory, Cork. This continuing professional development season was a celebration of clay as a fundamental and complex material. British Council Ireland was proud to support three UK artists, Clare Twomey, William Cobbing and Simon Kidd to participate in this experience.

### Beta Festival, Dublin, November 2023

[Beta](#) is Ireland's inaugural arts and technology festival. Launched in 2023, Beta critically engages with technology's impact on society through a combination of creativity, debate, and experimentation. We supported two UK-based artists, Caroline Sinderson and Libby Heaney, to showcase their projects, Potato Internet and Ent, at the festival in November 2023.

### So Say So, Wexford, September & November 2023

So Say So is a monthly event focusing on poetry, storytelling, and music curated and hosted by poet Stephen James Smith in the Wexford Arts Centre. British Council Ireland supported UK's Polar Bear (Steve Camden) and Zaffar Kunial to participate in [So Say So](#) in September & November 2023.





### International Literature Festival, May 2023

British Council Ireland partnered with the International Literature Festival Dublin on **Beyond Borders: Cross Cultural Publishing**, a panel discussion with three of Ireland and the UK's most exciting young writers to explore how working across the Irish Sea helped their development as writers. The panel consisted of John Patrick McHugh, Sara Baume, Thomas Morris in conversation with 4th Estate's Editorial Director, Kishani Widyaratna.

### Weft Studio, Dublin Fringe Festival, August 2023 – January 2024

British Council Ireland was a core partner in **Weft Studio**, a Dublin Fringe Festival initiative focusing on talent development and network-building for emerging and early career Black artists and artists of the global majority. The 2023 programme was led by Northern Ireland-based acclaimed writer and creative producer Shannon Yee, with interventions from Wales's Conor Allen, Scotland's Mele Brookes, and England's Benji Reid, among other international mentors.

### Design Declares, November 2023

**Design Declares** is a growing group of designers, design studios, agencies, and institutions which have declared a climate and ecological emergency. In 2023, they brought this global movement to Ireland. British Council Ireland supported the mobility of founder of Design Declares, Alexie Sommer, to launch the inaugural global chapter of Design Declares Ireland.

### Five Films for Freedom, March 2024

To celebrate the 10-year anniversary of British Council's Five Films for Freedom festival, a programme of five global LGBTQIA+ shorts, British Council Ireland hosted a **free screening and panel discussion** in Galway Arts Centre to explore the films in the context of LGBTQ+ rights in Ireland.

To find out more, please visit our website: [britishcouncil.ie](https://britishcouncil.ie)







## Other activity includes:

- **Aerowaves Dance Festival, April 2023**

We supported UK dance artists Eva Recacha and Ching-Ying Chien to travel to Ireland as part of a partnership with Aerowaves for their [Spring Forward](#) in 2023 which took place in Dublin.

- **Momentum Literature Festival, August 2023**

We supported Director of Cúirt Literature Festival, Manuela Moser, to attend as Ireland's delegate to [Momentum Literature Festival 2023](#) which took place in Edinburgh.

- **Irish Journal of Arts Management & Cultural Policy, October 2023**

British Council Ireland Country Director and co-founder of the Irish Journal of Cultural Policy and Arts Management, Kerry McCall Magan, chaired a guest talk with Rike Sitas of the African Centre for Cities at the [Journal's 10th issue celebration](#).

- **CoMuseum International Conference, December 2023**

Director of the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Annie Fletcher, attended as Irish delegate to 13th [CoMuseum International Conference](#) entitled Museums and Justice held from 6-8 December 2023 in Athens, Greece.

- **Creative Postcards Display and Culture Connects Conversation on Identity, January 2024**

We curated a [Creative Postcards display and Culture Connects Conversation](#) on the theme of Identity in the Irish Museum of Modern Art, bringing together school children who had taken part in the project and artists from across the UK and Ireland.

- **TAIGH/TŪ/TEACH, February 2024**

We partnered with Fishamble Theatre and the Scottish and Welsh Governments in Ireland to support the performance of [TAIGH/TŪ/TEACH](#), a site-specific, trilingual co-production in Ionad na Dromoda on the Iveragh Peninsula in County Kerry (9th - 14th February 2024).

- **Dublin International Film Festival, February 2024**

We partnered with the Dublin International Film Festival to bring Isra Al Kassi from the UK film collective, T A P E, to Dublin, where she gave a [masterclass on programming and audience development](#) to the Irish Film Programmers Network.

# Higher Education

The British Council's Higher Education programme aims to create educational opportunities around the world through partnerships and dialogue with policy makers, academics, researchers, and students. Key priorities include:

- **Shared global challenges of quality**
- **Inclusion**
- **Internationalisation**

Higher Education is key to building and maintaining enduring relationships between people of the UK and Ireland. Within the portfolio of global programmes in Higher Education, we focus on International Student Mobility and Marketing, Education Insights and Engagement, Alumni and Going Global Partnerships.



Higher Education Mobility  
Ireland  
*Report and Information Guide*  
Online Research Presentation  
October 25<sup>th</sup> 1-2pm, register with British Council



## Higher Education Mobility Research Dissemination, September 2023

We launched our [Higher Education Mobility Research and Higher Education Information Guide](#) on the UK and Ireland at the British Embassy in Dublin in September 2023 with keynote addresses from researchers, the Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy in Dublin and the Heads of the Scottish and Welsh Government Offices in Ireland.

## Higher Options, September 2023

[Higher Options](#) is a student recruitment fair in Dublin which attracts 30,000 students from across Ireland to speak to representatives from third-level institutions from Ireland, the UK, Europe and further afield. British Council Ireland participated in Higher Options in order to promote the UK as a study destination for Irish students and provide information to students interested in studying in the UK.

## Academically Speaking Workshop Series, September 2023

[Academically Speaking](#) was a series of communications training workshops led by communication skills expert Malcolm Love in Trinity College Dublin. The aim was to support the career development and training of researchers – with a focus on skills – in all research disciplines.





## Country Learning Session: Higher Education Mobility UK to Ireland, October 2023

We held an online [Country Learning Session](#) on UK Ireland Higher Education Mobility as part of British Council's 'International Student Mobility and Marketing' (ISMM) global programme. The session was attended by UK and Irish stakeholders who wanted to learn more about our work in this area.

## Going Global Conference, November 2023

[Going Global](#) is a conference for leaders in international education to debate the future of further and higher education. In 2023 it took place in Edinburgh and British Council Ireland supported Professor Ellen Hazelkorn (BH Associates and Technological University Dublin) to attend and take part in a session on Embracing Integration: Advancing Higher and Further Education Systems.

## Inaugural UK Ireland Alumni Reception, January 2024

We held a [UK Ireland Alumni Reception](#) in January 2024 at the British Ambassador's to Ireland's Residence to celebrate the long-standing relationship between Ireland and the UK in higher education. The event included keynote speeches from notable individuals in Ireland who completed their higher education in the UK and launched the British Council's 'Alumni UK' programme in Ireland.



# Non-Formal Education

The Youth Connect programme aims to connect young people with government, civil society, businesses and institutions in order to address various crises of the 21st century. This includes climate change, employment issues, social disconnection, conflict resolution and more. The programme offers a variety of activities such as focus groups and workshops for policy dialogues along with networking opportunities.

The programme has four strands:

- **Youth Connect | Artificial Intelligence for the Common Good**
- **Youth Connect | Climate Change**
- **Youth Connect | Leadership for Gender Equality**
- **Youth Connect | Social Cohesion**





### AI Industry Panel, September 2023

Hosted by the National College of Ireland (NCI), this **AI industry Panel** event was a follow-on to the successful AI Hackathon with NCI in March 2023. Held as part of British Council Ireland's Youth Connect programme, this panel event was attended by British and Irish AI experts. Moderated by ex BBC producer and presenter, Malcolm Love, the panel included Dr Maxine Mackintosh, The Alan Turing Institute; Deirdre O'Neill, Senior Development Advisor with Enterprise Ireland; Dr Prag Sharma, Head of AI at Citi; His Excellency Akhilesh Mishra, Indian Ambassador to Ireland; Chris MM Gordon, CEO of the Irish Social Enterprise Network.



### Cross-Border Cooperation Congress, October 2023

The **Cross-Border Cooperation Congress** took place in Lublin, Poland, in 2023, the year the city held the title of European Youth Capital, accompanied by the motto "City of the Young". Young people from all over Europe were invited to discuss the needs and aspirations of younger generations and how local communities can support this vision. British Council Ireland supported Duilleán O'Sullivan to attend the congress as Ireland's delegate.



### AI Hackathon, November 2023

The [Artificial Intelligence for the Common Good Hackathon](#) in Cork was part of our Youth Connect programme and a series of other hackathons across Europe (Cyprus, France, Greece and the UK). Teams of young people used AI to provide solutions to climate change on the theme of 'Green Cities'. The winning Irish team was awarded a study visit trip to Bristol, one of the leading sustainable cities in the UK, which took place in March 2023.

### Citizenship Workshop, November 2023

A [Citizenship Workshop](#) took place in Derry~Londonderry for young people in Ireland and Northern Ireland, hosted by the Nerve Centre. 30 young people studying at North West Regional College worked jointly on creating digital content with the aim to explore social cohesion challenges and propose social actions that promote shared values. British Council Ireland supported a delegate from our [Film25](#) project to attend.



### Light Moves Festival, November 2023

UK-based choreographer, Rosemary Lee, explored themes of dance, nature and community in a [Dance and Ecology workshop](#) as part of Light Moves Festival with Limerick Dance. An accompanying series of wrap-around community activities was led by DL.BRIDGE Artist, Katy Hewison, in collaboration with Rosemary Lee and Learning and Engagement Facilitator, Aoife Doherty, from Limerick City Gallery of Art.



## Bristol Study Trip, March 2024

Winning teams of the Youth Connect AI hackathons across Europe attended a [study trip in Bristol](#), one of the UK's leading sustainable cities, in March 2024. The trip consisted of visits to institutions and projects to gain inspiration and expand delegates' knowledge of creating AI solutions for sustainable urban living. Participants also took part in a Youth-Policy dialogue event with experts in AI, sustainability and social impact, including policymakers, researchers, companies, and academics.

## Global Perceptions Focus Group and Research Briefing, March 2024

In March 2024, British Council Ireland launched the Global Perceptions survey results for Ireland in a [focus group and research briefing in Dublin](#). The Global Perceptions survey gathered data on how 18-34-year-olds see the UK and the world from 18 of the G20 member states and additional countries including Ireland. To explore the Irish data further, British Council Ireland partnered with Cooperation Ireland to hold a focus group with 15 Irish people aged 18-34. Journalist and author, Dearbhail McDonald, was the event rapporteur and shared the findings from the focus group discussions in an afternoon research briefing with invited stakeholders.





# English and Exams

In Ireland the British Council operate Exams through 5 partners who have ten locations/ independent test centres (ITCs) spread across Dublin, Limerick, Galway and Cork. These are managed by the British Council UK (Manchester) office with a certification and verification service provided by the British Council Ireland (Dublin) office.

- In 2023-24, we delivered **6,951** IELTS tests in Ireland. Growth of this sector in Ireland is apparent as the 2022 total was **4,853** IELTS tests throughout Ireland. Our market split was 78%. The 2023-24 figures represent an increase of **44%** year on year.
- In Ireland our other major activity is delivering ACCA (professional accountancy qualifications). In 2023, we ran **7,000** ACCA exams across Dublin, Cork, and Limerick. For context, we expect to deliver **137,534** exams across UK&I as a whole this financial year. This means Ireland contributes approximately **12%** of the total.



# Reach

In 2023-24 we reached:

**28,338** Students

**389** Education Leaders

**50** Arts Leaders

**36** Artists

**12** Community/CSO  
/NGO leaders

Website: **252,061**

Online: **67,952**

Publication and Broadcast: **35,525**

Face to Face: **23,274**

Social Media: **13,390**

“Connecting with other people in this exploratory space is helping me see and feel my place in all of it.”

*Dance and Ecology Light Moves workshop participant*

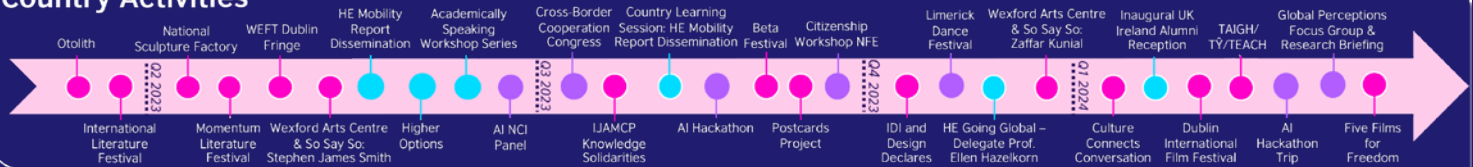
“The skills and techniques I learned have proved invaluable in my academic pursuits, and I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to attend such a transformative event. I want to express my appreciation to the British Council Ireland and Malcolm Love for working together to coordinate this project.”

*Academically Speaking workshop participant*

“It has been a genuinely revolutionary experience for me and one which I will be incorporating into my research and practice going forward!”

*AI for the Common Good Hackathon Participant*

## Country Activities



# Our Vision

By 2025-26, we will have strengthened the relationship between Ireland and the UK where Arts, Education and English are the critical components. We will build active and sustained connections, challenge mindsets and enable greater trust and mutual understanding between people and organisations in order to champion a more inclusive and sustainable future and expand the recognition and value of the UK, and the British Council, in Ireland.

For further information, please contact  
Country Director, **Dr Kerry McCall Magan**  
✉ [Kerry.McCallMagan@britishcouncil.org](mailto:Kerry.McCallMagan@britishcouncil.org)





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