

**IHA Statement:**

**'Impact 2030:  
Ireland's New Research and  
Innovation Strategy'**

Irish Humanities Alliance



## **The Irish Humanities Alliance responds to the launch of *Impact 2030: Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy***

As an all-island body, representing Arts and Humanities researchers in eleven cross-border institutions, the [Irish Humanities Alliance \(IHA\)](#) welcomes is the strategy's commitment to placing the AHSS 'on an equal and statutory footing' to STEM and other fields. Parity of esteem between all research areas will be pivotal if Ireland is to build its research capacity in a way that will enable it to address current and future global challenges. Furthermore, the document's language relating to the broader societal importance of research, beyond narrow economic considerations, is welcome.

In a major development, we note that Impact 2030 proposes the creation of a new research and innovation funding agency that will build on the missions of the Irish Research Council (IRC) and Science Foundation Ireland (SFI). The government has given a commitment that the agency will be established by way of a landmark research bill, which we welcome. Provided there is requisite investment from government, this process will create an opportunity for Ireland to lead in developing an innovative and integrated funding system, for all discipline areas, and for inter disciplinary and trans-disciplinary research.

In an otherwise challenging funding context for Arts and Humanities researchers in Ireland, the IRC as the main funding body for researchers in these areas over the past ten years, has played a major role in furthering the cause of Arts and Humanities research. The IRC has fostered a vibrant research community by supporting excellent researchers across all disciplines and career stages. The IHA would strongly argue, therefore, that the ethos, legacy and work of the IRC needs to be reflected in the new structures. It is imperative that the new agency funds, and adequately represents, outstanding original research across the Arts and Humanities.

The Arts and Humanities have been central to creating, and maintaining, the island of Ireland's cultural reputation at home and abroad. Four of the eleven Irish Nobel Laureates – William Butler Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Samuel Beckett, and Seamus Heaney – have emerged from the Humanities. Arts and Humanities disciplines, in both jurisdictions, enjoy an excellent international reputation, as evidenced in the [QS World University Rankings by subject 2022](#), thereby contributing to the island's reputation for academic excellence. The Arts and Humanities also make a significant contribution to the creative sector – through museums, galleries, libraries, music, performing arts, publishing, tourism and the visual arts.

The Arts and Humanities help us to comprehend the world, and the lived experience. Society expresses itself and understands itself through the Arts and Humanities. They foster a long-term perspective on societal challenges and the processing of shared histories and complex relationships. At the start of the pandemic, before we had vaccines for the novel coronavirus, the Medical Humanities offered an avenue for us to learn about [past pandemics](#). During the crisis, the humanities have been equally crucial in enabling us to understand issues of trust, social value, cohesion, grief, social media, as well as identifying the role of the arts and culture in sustaining people and interpreting a moment unexperienced for a hundred years.

More generally, it is vital that research dealing not only with ‘real-world problems’ is adequately supported, but that we recognise that some of the most impactful, and significant research often emerges from ‘blue skies’ and open-ended research projects. For research and innovation in Ireland to continue to be internationally valued this approach must also be safeguarded. Arts and Humanities research provides the critical space in which society can reflect on its current challenges and provide research informed by values that science alone cannot provide.

The IHA looks forward to engaging proactively in the stakeholder consultation and wishes to reiterate its support for a sustainable funding model supporting Arts and Humanities research that is aligned with the principles of the shared-island initiative and avoids post-Brexit barriers to research collaboration on the island.

### **Further information**

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