

Annual Conference of the Irish Association of Law Teachers, 2026

Queen's University Belfast

27th-29th November 2026

“The Future of Legal Education: Keeping People at the Centre.”

- Call for papers – deadline 9th October
- Matheson PhD Scholarship – deadline 5th October

The Irish Association of Law Teachers is delighted to announce its annual conference will take place in School of Law, Queen's University Belfast,

Conference Theme

The general theme of the conference is **“The Future of Legal Education: Keeping People at the Centre.”**

The parallel sessions will begin on Friday 27st November afternoon.

The Plenary session will be on Saturday 28nd November in the form of a moderated panel discussion on the theme of the conference. Speakers for the plenary Prof. Ali Struthers (education and wider participation), Dr. Verona Ni Drisceoil (AI and assessment) and Dr. Steven Montagu-Cairns (liberating legal pedagogy).

Prof. Ali Struthers' principal research interest lies in socio-legal explorations of children's rights, particularly around human rights in education. Their work has addressed issues of: human rights education; children's participation and empowerment; safeguarding; privacy; British values; children's rights literature; children's legal education; and media sensationalism around human rights in the UK. Their 2020 monograph, *Teaching Human Rights in Primary Schools: Overcoming the barriers to effective practice* (Routledge) focuses on Human Rights Education in English primary education, utilising quantitative and qualitative empirical research methods to better understand the reasons for deficiencies in current practices in this area. It argues that England is not meeting its international legal obligations, but that the problem is more ingrained than simply a lack of relevant government policy. Teachers are apprehensive about HRE due to misunderstandings, misconceptions and myths surrounding human rights. The book offers broad, interdisciplinary recommendations for reform to current HRE practice in England.

Dr. Verona Ni Drisceoil's research interests lie in legal education and pedagogy broadly defined. She has a particular passion for, and interest in, assessment, active learning, inequality in education and community and belonging. She regularly contributes to current debates in legal education in the form of blog posts and conference

presentations. She recently co-published a book with Jo Wilson and Jeanette Ashton entitled *How to Embed Authenticity in Legal Assessments: Responding to Generative AI* (Edward Elgar 2026). In addition to her current research in legal education and pedagogy, Verona has examined the relationship between law and language and has published on the language rights debate in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. This research built on her PhD study exploring the gaps between the normative justifications advanced for language rights and language legislation and the effective realisation of those rights and legislative provisions in practice.

Dr. Steven Montagu-Cairns is a multi-award-winning academic and higher education strategic leader specialising in financial regulation, corporate governance and prevention of financial crime within multinational corporate entities. Steve is currently the Deputy Pro-Dean: Student Education within the Faculty of Environment and Social Sciences. He has a passion for innovative pedagogy, game based learning and the use of digital technology within legal education. He is committed to liberating legal pedagogy from outdated methods that have led to an impersonal, uninspiring and disjointed learning experience for the modern student. He is the co-founder and co-convenor of Legal Educational Games: Engagement, Network and Dissemination (LEGEND) the largest global network to support academics interested in the use of game based learning in legal education. <https://legaleducationalgames.my.canva.site/>

Conference Format

The IALT conference is famous for its friendly and supportive atmosphere. Many speakers use the opportunity to present work in progress. In line with the practice from previous years, the conference will begin on Friday afternoon with parallel sessions. On Saturday morning the morning parallel sessions will be followed by the plenary talks and roundtable in the afternoon.

The AGM of the Association will be held on Saturday afternoon (time TBC), at which the Council for the 2026-2027 year will be elected. This will be followed by the Gala Dinner that evening.

We plan to organise a cultural excursion on 29th Sunday morning, further details to follow.

Call for Papers

The Council of the Irish Association of Law Teachers welcomes papers on all areas of substantive and procedural law and on any issue relating to legal education. Presentations are not restricted to the theme of the conference, although abstracts engaging with the theme are also welcome. Participants are also encouraged to propose panels addressing specific themes in any area of law or law teaching.

Abstracts (300 words maximum) should be submitted by the **9th of October** using the form below under the heading **‘Booking and Payment Methods’**.

Venue

The conference will be hosted within the School of Law, Queen's University Belfast. All sessions will be held within the Main Site Tower

On Friday a welcome reception will be held in the Main Site Tower reception area.

On Saturday, the Gala Dinner will be hosted in Europa Hotel, which is about a 15-minute walk from the campus. <https://www.europahotelbelfast.com/> Please note the Gala Dinner has a limited number of spaces available and early booking is advised.

The Queen's University campus is accessible by car, bus, and train. Parking on campus is available on evenings and weekends. For those arriving on Friday afternoon, there will be some parking restrictions – further details will be provided closer to the time.

Accommodation

We are arranging for a limited number of rooms to be available with Hotels around Belfast. Please ensure you follow the instructions to avail of the special rates (special rates are not guaranteed and are on a first-come, first-served basis). These links will be sent out in due course. Some hotels haven't confirmed details at present.

There are other hotel options nearby. There are also some Bed & Breakfast options nearby.

Please bear in mind that the Gala Dinner normally runs until late evening.

Conference Fees

Conference fees include attendance at the conference, all coffee breaks, lunches, dinners, receptions, and a social outing but exclude accommodation. However, please note that attendance at the Gala dinner will incur an additional charge for those paying the day rate.

There are **five categories of conference fee**:

(a) Conference fee for IALT members: €195 / £170

This fee is for existing members of the IALT (who have a standing order for IALT membership or have recently purchased membership through Paypal).

(b) Conference fee including membership of the IALT: €215 / £188

This fee is for those wishing to attend the conference, but who are not already IALT members. It includes membership for the 2025/2026 year.

(c) Conference Day Rate for IALT Members: €115/£100

This rate is available to members who wish to attend either the Friday or Saturday of the conference, including lunches. This does not include the Gala Dinner.

Delegates who are not members and who wish to avail of this rate should purchase membership either by standing order or by Paypal (€20/£18 per annum).

(d) Conference Saturday Day Rate including Gala Dinner for IALT Members: €150/£125

This rate is available to members who wish to attend the Saturday conference, including lunch **and** the Gala dinner (limited spaces available).

Delegates who are not members and who wish to avail of this rate should purchase membership either by standing order or by Paypal (€20/£18 per annum).

(e) Discounted Student rate: €100/£90 (for Postgraduate Members)

‘Postgraduate member’ for this purpose means a postgraduate research student who is a member of the IALT who is pursuing a research degree, excluding staff who are employed full-time in a teaching/research role. This reduced fee entitles Postgraduate Members to attend all the events and meals of the conference from Friday evening to Sunday morning.

Postgraduates who are not members must pay the membership fee of €20/£18 in addition to the discounted student rate of €100/£90.

Booking and Payment Methods

Delegates intending to attend the conference, but do not intend to present a paper, should complete this form:

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=6ner6qW040mh6NbdI6HyhISFYIXvOapAjFQqMAGLN2hUNINBVzJDWkpKSIE2SVRKMkhNNzEyTTFHVS4u>

Delegates intending to attend the conference and present a paper, should complete this form:

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=6ner6qW040mh6NbdI6HyhISFYIXvOapAjFQqMAGLN2hUNFpBOU02Sks2VEFXM0pISkpLRzVXUjZJRy4u>

Payment for the conference may be made:

- online at <http://www.ialt.ie/payment/>
- by cheque:
- **euro cheques** made payable to the Irish Association of Law Teachers, to be posted to Dr Brónagh Heverin, Treasurer, IALT, Atlantic Technological University, Donegal-Letterkenny

- **Sterling cheques** made payable to the Irish Association of Law Teachers, to be posted to Dr Brónagh Heverin, Treasurer, IALT, Atlantic Technological University, Donegal-Letterkenny
- if your home institution has agreed to pay directly, please contact Dr. Heverin for an invoice to be issued to your home institution.

For any cheques or electronic transfers paid by your home institution, please ask them to indicate on any payments who the payment relates to and what precisely it is for (e.g. which day(s) and if including membership or not).

Postgraduate Scholarships

Two scholarships are available to postgraduate students wishing to present a paper at the 2026 IALT Annual Conference. These scholarships will cover the cost of accommodation, reasonable travel costs within Ireland, and the conference fee for successful applicants.

Scholarship applications will be judged based on the coherence, originality, and topicality of the submitted abstract. While previous winners of the scholarships are eligible to apply and their abstracts will be considered, preference will be given to new applicants.

Those interested in applying for this scholarship should submit an abstract to the relevant link by **5th October 2026** and tick the Scholarship box. Applicants should set out the title of their proposed paper, their institutional affiliation, and an abstract of no more than 300 words.

We look forward to welcoming you to Belfast