TEAGASC MSc WALSH SCHOLAR OPPORTUNITY

"agriRDM: Overcoming Discipline Specific Research Data Management Challenges in Agri-Food Research"

Walsh Scholars Ref Number: 2025037

Background

Modern agri-food research generates vast amounts of valuable data. **Research Data Management (RDM)** refers to the organisation, storage, preservation, and sharing of data collected and used in research. However, researchers across the sector have not yet consistently adopted effective RDM practices. Many agri-food researchers encounter challenges in managing and sharing their data stemming from lack of awareness and targeted incentives related to discipline-specific barriers. Yet, improved RDM is vital for **open science**, interdisciplinary collaboration, and accelerating innovation to address complex challenges in agriculture and food systems.

The **agriRDM project** is a collaborative initiative between Teagasc and University College Dublin (UCD) in Ireland, Wageningen University & Research (WUR) in the Netherlands, and ZALF (Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research) in Germany. This project aims to enhance RDM uptake in the agri-food research community by understanding the human factors behind data management practices. By examining how researchers across different agricultural disciplines handle and share data, agriRDM will develop targeted solutions and best practices to foster a culture of data sharing and reuse. This MSc Walsh Scholarship position is a key part of agriRDM, contributing research that will inform the development of interventions to build an open, data-driven research culture in agriculture.

Research Focus

This two-year Walsh Scholar MSc will be part of the agriRDM project and will investigate the **behavioural factors** that influence agri-food researchers' engagement with RDM. In particular, the research will explore why some researchers readily adopt good data management and sharing practices while others encounter resistance or obstacles. This will involve examining motivations, attitudes, and perceived barriers across different agricultural disciplines (e.g. animal science, crop science, environmental research, food technology, etc.), recognizing that each field may have its own data culture and challenges.

To address these questions, the MSc will take a mixed-methods approach. The scholar will deploy surveys to assess RDM practices and attitudes among researchers in Ireland, the Netherlands, and Germany, followed by in-depth qualitative research (such as interviews or focus groups) to gain deeper insight into discipline-specific needs. Established behaviour change models will be applied to identify key drivers and barriers affecting researchers' RDM behaviours. By comparing findings across disciplines and countries, the project will pinpoint what incentives, support mechanisms, or training can effectively encourage researchers to

embrace **best-practice RDM**. The ultimate goal is to provide practical recommendations and develop interventions that help build an open, data-driven research culture in agriculture.

Requirements
The ideal candidate will have:

- **Educational Background**: A first-class or upper second-class honours degree (or equivalent) in a relevant discipline – for example, agricultural science, behavioural science, psychology, sociology, etc.
- **Research Skills**: Experience with both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Skills in survey design/analysis and conducting interviews, case studies or workshops with stakeholders are highly desirable.
- **Domain Interest**: An interest in science or environmental/agri-food research is important. Familiarity with Open Science, FAIR or research data management principles is a plus (but not mandatory).
- **Soft Skills**: Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to engage research stakeholders and present findings clearly. The candidate should be self-motivated, capable of independent work, and also able to collaborate effectively as part of an interdisciplinary team.
- **Language**: Proficiency in English (both written and spoken) is required. (International applicants may need to demonstrate English language competency as per host institution guidelines.)

Award
The MSc Scholarship is a research project supported by the Teagasc Walsh Scholarship funding. It is envisaged that the scholarship will commence in September 2025.

The scholarship funding is €31,000 per annum and comprises of University fees of up to a maximum of €6,000 and flat rate stipend of €25,000. It is tenable for 2 years (24 months), subject to satisfactory progress in studies each year.

The successful scholarship recipient will be registered as an MSc student at UCD and will ideally be based in Teagasc, Athenry, Co. Galway; however other Irish locations will be considered. Supervision will be provided by an expert team from Teagasc, WUR, ZALF, and UCD ensuring the student receives guidance from both the agricultural research domain and the RDM/behavioural science domain.

Importantly, the project's international partnership means the student will have opportunities to visit and learn from partner institutions in the Netherlands and Germany. ZALF, WUR, and UCD will also support the research conducted by facilitating access to the German, Dutch, and Irish agricultural science communities.

Further Information
For any informal inquiries or further information about this opportunity, please contact:

- **Dr. John Hyland** – Teagasc (Data Value Platform Manager). Email: *john.hyland@teagasc.ie*

Application Procedure

Interested candidates should submit the following application materials:

1. **Curriculum Vitae (CV)** – detailing your academic qualifications, any relevant research experience, and other applicable skills or achievements.
2. **Cover Letter** – outlining your interest in this MSc research opportunity and explaining how your background and experience make you a suitable candidate. Highlight any experience in social/behavioural research, data management, or the agri-food context.
3. Contact details of **two academic referees**.

Closing date

Please email your application as a single PDF or as separate documents to **Dr. John Hyland** (Email: *john.hyland@teagasc.ie*) **before 5:00 pm (Irish Time) on the 20th of June 2025**. In the subject line of your email, please include **"agriRDM MSc Scholarship Application"** so that your application is clearly identified.

Shortlisted applicants will be contacted for an interview (which may be conducted virtually). The expected start date for the successful candidate is September 2025 (or as soon as possible thereafter, depending on graduation and administrative arrangements).

Teagasc and its partners are committed to equality of opportunity. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified candidates.