

Dr Redmond O'Connell, Associate Professor in the School of Psychology and Trinity College Institute of Neuroscience (TCIN), wins prestigious European Research Council Award.

ERC awards support investigator-driven, frontier research across all fields, and are awarded on the basis of scientific excellence. The Consolidator Grants support talented, mid-career researchers who have recently built independent, excellent teams and wish to strengthen them. These grants, which support five-year projects, are among the most sought-after and competitive in the world of research.



Dr Redmond O'Connell, Associate Professor in the School of Psychology and Trinity Institute of Neuroscience (TCIN)

IndDecision: A neurally-informed behavioural modelling framework for examining individual and group difference in perceptual decision making is the title of **Dr Redmond O'Connell's** project. In it he will examine how people make perceptual decisions and how that changes with age.

Dr O'Connell previously won an ERC Starting Grant in 2014 on decision making, the results of which led to this more advanced proposal intending to leverage a new framework to resolve ongoing debates in the field of neuroscience over contradicting models.

Dr O'Connell said:

This ERC Consolidator award represents a really exciting opportunity for several reasons.

First, it is going to allow my team to pursue its goal of developing new and more precise ways of measuring the effects of natural aging on our decision-making abilities.

Research of this kind has the potential to help us to detect age-related brain pathologies at an earlier stage and thus provide greater opportunities for treatments to take effect.

Secondly, a large portion of this funding will go towards training postgraduate and postdoctoral researches who represent the future of science in Ireland.

Trinity won three of the six grants awarded to researchers at Irish universities. The successes bring Trinity's total number of ERC grants awarded under the EU Horizon 2020 and FP7 funding competitions to 45.

Provost, Dr Patrick Prendergast, said:

European Research Council Consolidator Awards are highly competitive so it is a huge success for Trinity researchers to secure three. It is also very pleasing to see one award going to one of our researchers in each of the three ERC streams – social sciences and humanities, life sciences, and physical sciences and engineering – as this demonstrates the strength and depth of the work taking place in Trinity. These awards, which fund frontier research, will enable their recipients to plan their research careers and further grow their teams here in Ireland.

Dean of Research, Linda Doyle, said:

[They]... are very deserving awardees and we are very proud of their success. They are driven by curiosity and will be implementing extremely creative approaches in their research projects, which have myriad potential impacts on their research fields and on society. Additionally, their success will enable them to nurture more research difference makers of the future as the funding will support a number of highly talented PhD and Postdoctoral researchers.