



Prof. Felix Hackett MRIA Papers

Royal Irish Academy Special List No. A047

Reference Code	RIA 24 F 21
Level of Description	Fonds
Date	1923-1948
Description	<p>Felix Hackett was born on 15 August 1882 in Omagh, Co. Tyrone. He studied at UCD and in 1905 was appointed a Junior Fellow of the Royal University of Ireland where until 1907 he worked on radioactivity with RUI Professor J.A. McClelland. Following study at John Hopkins University, Baltimore he was awarded a PhD there in 1908. In 1910, Hackett was appointed as lecturer at the Royal College of Science, later being promoted to Professor of Physics in 1921. This latter position transferred to UCD when the College of Science amalgamated with the larger institution. He retired from UCD in 1952.</p> <p>Hackett was also actively involved with a variety of non-scientific organisations and was variously President of An Óige, An Taisce, the Library Association of Ireland and the Royal Dublin Society. Elected to the RIA in 1907, he held the office of Treasurer from 1930-1962. Hackett died at his home in Rathgar on 11 December 1970, having been predeceased by his wife Mary (née Murnaghan) in 1968. The couple had no children.</p> <p>These papers, along with 2 boxes of scientific and personal papers from William McFadden Orr, came to the RIA having been presented by the Murnaghan family in 1971. Hackett and McFadden Orr had been colleagues at the Royal University, later UCD.</p> <p>Catalogue by Brian McArdle, February 2019.</p>
Extent	9 items

Reference Code	RIA/24/F/21/1
Level of Description	Item
Date	5 December 1923
Title	The organisation of applied science in relation to agriculture and industry
Description	A paper presented to the Chemical Association at the College of Science, Merrion Street, Dublin in which Hackett explains that the new Irish state must develop scientific organisations separate and distinct from those of the UK as the state could no longer depend on the National Physical Laboratory, Patent Office, Meteorological Office and similar UK based organisations. Hackett recommended that the Irish state establish organisations to direct scientific research towards national goals in different areas of agriculture, manufacturing industry and government services. He included examples and experiences from other countries and cited similar recommendations from other researchers. He also argued that the College of Science in Merrion Street was suitable to act as a national centre for applied science. Hackett was Professor of Physics and Dean of the College at this time.
Extent	

Reference Code	RIA/24/F/21/2
Level of Description	Item
Date	[1924]
Title	Chemical services - co-ordination in the Irish Free State
Description	Rough draft of an article proposing to establish a Department of Science with divisions in Chemistry and Physics. Hackett places an emphasis on Chemistry, focussing on the requirements of central and local government. Hackett also argues that facilities in the College of Science were satisfactory by European standards for the provision of scientific services but does not indicate a final outcome for the proposal.
Extent	

Reference Code	RIA/24/F/21/3
Level of Description	Item
Date	21 June 1924
Title	Newspaper cutting on the future of the College of Science
Description	A cutting from the Irish Independent, 21 June 1921, which discusses a variety of options for the future of the College of Science. Amongst these suggestions are: that students could obtain degrees from TCD subject to certain requirements, that UCD could expand its activities using the model of an English provincial university, that UCD and TCD would be merged to avoid duplication in certain departments, that a National Institute of Agriculture and Technology be founded similar to those in Charlottenburg and Massachusetts and finally that educational policies will look forward to the needs of the state 5 or 10 years hence and train engineers, chemist and agricultural advisors to meet these future demands.
Extent	1 newspaper cutting pasted onto a single page

Reference Code	RIA/24/F/21/4
Level of Description	Item
Date	[1924]
Title	The training of science teachers
Description	Possibly part of a submission to government. Hackett emphasises the importance of first year at university level and suggests courses of 30 hours per week for 30 weeks (including laboratory classes) in the following subjects: mathematics, mathematical physics, physics, chemistry, drawing and Irish. He recommends that mathematics should take a student to Leaving Certificate Honours standard. He acknowledges that Irish as a language is not part of science but suggests that it could be used between demonstrators and students in laboratory classes. He envisages that professors and lecturers could become proficient in Irish to the level that lectures could be provided through the medium of Irish. There is no indication of any follow-up on these points.
Extent	4pp, typewritten.

Reference Code	RIA/24/F/21/5
Level of Description	Item
Date	[1933-1934]
Title	Summary of a report on the organisation of industrial research in the Irish Free State
Description	<p>Possibly a working document for the paper presented by Hackett in 1934 to the Institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland entitled 'The organisation of industrial research'. Notes and memoranda on a similar topic can be found in the National Archives of Ireland, dated 1933 (NAI Ref code: TSCH/3/S10935)</p> <p>This summary consists of the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Canadian Research Council could be a suitable model. • Industrial research would develop new areas of research and new industries over a period. • Expenditure would be around 1/9 of Canadian expenditure. • Industrial fellowships similar to the Mellon Institute were recommended. • A large programme was not advised as suitable training for industrial research still needed to be identified. Craft skills were included in this point. • Technical information centre was recommended to provide assistance to small manufacturers. • Associate committees could assist in identification of problems that would be referred to university laboratories with adequate facilities. Opportunities would be created for young researchers to continue working in areas of interest. • A survey of organisations other than government should be undertaken to find funds. • Research in relation to agriculture was excluded due to previous recommendations. • Recommendations did not require legislation. • A single institute at an existing state location should be formed over a period. • Proposals for grades working in research.
Extent	

Reference Code	RIA/24/F/21/6
Level of Description	Item
Date	[1933-1934]
Title	Memorandum on industrial research in the Irish Free State
Description	<p>Possibly a working document for the paper presented by Hackett in 1934 to the Institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland entitled 'The organisation of industrial research'. Notes and memoranda on a similar topic can be found in the National Archives of Ireland, dated 1933 (NAI Ref code: TSCH/3/S10935)</p> <p>Memorandum discusses a suitable definition for industrial research based on two examples. From a proposed definition Hackett examines figures from the Census of Production on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brewing • Butter, cheese and margarine • Fertilisers • Chemical industries • Food industries • Engineering • Textile and shoe industries • Tobacco
Extent	

Reference Code	RIA/24/F/21/7
Level of Description	Item
Date	Undated
Title	Notes on organisation of the scientific activities administered by the Government of Ireland
Description	<p>Rough notes in which Hackett emphasises that the Irish state should follow the successful models of other countries in relation to scientific activities. In particular, Hackett recommends organisations in Canada, USA and Denmark and gives a number of possible structures that could be integrated with existing Irish structures. Hackett also notes that advanced training should be combined with scientific investigations and that a panel of experts should make appointments with the stipulation that any person considered for appointment should have relevant experience from abroad.</p>
Extent	

Reference Code	RIA/24/F/21/8
Level of Description	Item
Date	May 1940
Title	Oral tradition and the County Library
Description	Paper presented by Prof Felix Hackett as Vice-President of the Library Association to the annual conference in Cavan in May 1940.
Extent	

Reference Code	RIA/24/F/21/9
Level of Description	Item
Date	14 April 1948
Title	Memorandum on higher education
Description	<p>Redraft of a document from 14 June 1946 to include an appendix on research in the USA following WW2. There is no indication of publication or submission to government. In this memorandum Hackett suggests that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A committee consisting of university professors and staff from the ESB, Aer Lingus, CIE, Bord na Mona and Post Office should be formed to review the requirements of higher engineering education. • Courses introduced by MIT and CalTech should be used as examples to follow. • Courses based on 'cramming' should be avoided as technical knowledge is developed over time. • Proposals from the UK Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE) on engineer training should not be followed. • The entry point to courses should continue to be the Leaving Certificate. The main disadvantage was that this level did not emphasise subject areas of science or drawing. • A break of one year between secondary school and university education would be helpful. This period could be used to introduce students to engineering technology but should not become an extension to training. • Training should take four years of forty weeks per year rather than twenty-five weeks per year as is the norm in the UK.

	Hackett noted points in a submission to the US Government on scientific research following WW2. There was no indication of a final draft or follow-up on the proposals.
Extent	