



Acadamh Óg na hÉireann  
Young Academy Ireland

# Young Academy of Ireland Charter



Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann  
Royal Irish Academy

# Preamble

The Royal Irish Academy (RIA) Strategic Plan 2021-2023 identified the establishment of an all-island interdisciplinary Young Academy as a key strategic priority. To this end, the Academy established a Young Academy Working Group (WG) which has informed the development of this proposal as to how the Young Academy of Ireland (YAI) should be established with consideration as to its:

- I. Mission
- II. Principles
- III. Legal structure
- IV. Governance
- V. Funding
- VI. Membership criteria
- VII. Membership term
- VIII. Membership selection committee



## Mission

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**The following is proposed as the initial mission of the Young Academy of Ireland:**

- To provide a cross-disciplinary platform that can allow early career researchers and innovators (ECRIs) to contribute effectively to the development of all-island research and cultural life.
- To ensure that ECRIs are represented and actively participate in discussions that address global issues among ECRIs.
- To bring together ECRIs to work collaboratively for the benefit of society.



## Principles

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**The Young Academy of Ireland will be established in line with the Global Young Academy's Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Young Academies (2019) and will adhere to the following values:**

- Excellence
- Diversity and inclusivity
- Integrity and ethical behaviour
- Collegiality
- Scholarly rigour
- Academic freedom
- Transparency and trust
- Equality and social justice
- Dignity, respect and care for the individual.



## Legal structure

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The YAI will be established under the auspices of the Royal Irish Academy. This means that the RIA and the RIA Council will have accountability for the governance and funding of the YAI.

While the RIA will be involved in helping to establish the YAI, the YAI will be autonomous in developing its work programme and activities. Its outputs and activities may not necessarily be representative of the views of the RIA. The principle of autonomy of the YAI is in accordance with international practice in relation to Young Academies.



## Governance

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### **The key governance structures of the YAI are:**

- the YAI Advisory Board, and
- the YAI Executive Committee

The RIA Council will delegate authority for overseeing the establishment and operation of the YAI to a YAI Advisory Board. The YAI Advisory Board will consist of four Members of the Royal Irish Academy (MRIA) nominated by the President of the Royal Irish Academy (PRIA), as well as the Executive Director of the RIA, the Head of Policy and International Relations of the RIA, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the YAI. A nominated RIA staff member responsible for supporting the YAI will provide the secretariat for the Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will be chaired by the YAI Chair once he/she is appointed: in the interim period prior to the appointment of the Chair, the YAI Advisory Board will be chaired by the Executive Director, RIA.

The Advisory Board will support the establishment of the initial Membership Selection Committee which will be created for the specific purpose of appointing the first cohort of YAI members. It will also serve as a conduit for updating the RIA Council on the activities of the YAI.

Following the selection of the first cohort of YAI members, the Advisory Board will support the YAI Chair and Vice-Chair in developing the YAI internal structures: in particular, agreement on the roles, number and initial functions of YAI officers, and oversight of the selection of those officers. YAI officers will be nominated and approved by the YAI membership.

The Advisory Board will be responsible for overseeing the administration of the YAI funding and will advise on particular issues that arise for the YAI. It will ensure that any funding is spent in accordance with funding terms, and that RIA procedures, protocols and guidelines apply for all funding and procurement. The Advisory Board will oversee, in consultation with the YAI Executive Committee, a short review of the operation of the YAI after the first two years of its establishment.

### **The YAI Executive Committee will consist of:**

- YAI Chair (who will chair the Executive Committee)
- YAI Vice-Chair
- YAI officers
- A nominee of the PRIA
- RIA Executive Director (or his/her nominee)

The RIA staff member responsible for the YAI will provide the secretariat for the YAI Executive Committee.

The YAI Executive Committee will prepare proposals for the YAI annual General Assembly and will look after the day-to-day operation of the YAI, including consulting with YAI members to develop a work programme and selecting chairs / co-chairs of working groups. The YAI Executive Committee will approve the YAI annual work programme, and selecting their own chair / co-chairs and of working groups.



**Figure 1: Young Academy of Ireland Governance Structure**

The YAI will have autonomy over its priorities and activities but will exist under the aegis of the RIA and will not be a separate legal entity. The YAI is autonomous from the RIA and any communication by the YAI does not necessarily reflect the views of the RIA. The YAI (with the assistance of the YAI Advisory Board) will put in place appropriate mechanisms to ensure that any communications or position papers are carefully reviewed in advance of publication to ensure that they comply with the principles of the YAI, including scholarly rigour.

Membership of the YAI is distinct from membership of the RIA.

The first YAI cohort of 40 members will be appointed for a four-year term (2023-2026). Membership of the YAI can be held for one four-year term only. A second cohort of 40 members will be elected in 2024, with subsequent elections to be arranged by the YAI with a maximum of 80 members at any one time. The YAI may decide, once established, to increase the number of its members in the future. The YAI will hold an Annual General Assembly of its members.



## Funding

The funding for the YAI will be held by the RIA as a restricted fund and accounted for separately in the RIA annual accounts. The RIA will be responsible for ensuring that the funds are spent in accordance with any funding terms and in line with applicable public sector regulations and requirements.

The RIA will make staff and other necessary resources available to support the YAI, within the context of the overall resources available. This includes use of office space in Academy House and procurement of IT equipment and systems. In commissioning any services for the YAI, the RIA will follow established procedures in relation to procurement.

The budget for the YAI anticipates the employment of one member of staff in the first instance to oversee the establishment of the YAI and to support the YAI Advisory Board and Executive Committee. This individual will be an employee of the RIA.

It is envisaged that funding for the YAI will include a mixture of exchequer funding, philanthropy, and private sponsorship. It will be open to the YAI to explore other funding avenues as appropriate. There is no fee for membership of the YAI.



## Membership criteria

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Membership of the YAI is open to all ECRIIs who demonstrate a high level of excellence in their discipline, whether in academia or industry, evidenced by a proven track record and expected future achievements.

The membership selection committee will consider all aspects of each candidate's qualifications and skills in the context of the mission of the YAI, with a view to creating a membership cohort with a diversity of experience and perspectives.

Applicants for membership must demonstrate a commitment to making a difference in society, collegiality, and leadership potential. The YAI will pursue a broad range of programmes to promote multidisciplinary experiences, engage in policy debate, networking opportunities with other ECRIIs and to foster international and interdisciplinary collaboration. Applicants should provide evidence of interest or experience in one or more of these areas.

The YAI is committed to diversity, equality and inclusion. It will encourage and consider applications from all qualified candidates. The YAI welcomes applications from researchers from minority groups, new and emerging disciplines in academia, and researchers working in government, industry, and non-governmental sectors. It will actively encourage a breadth of regional, disciplinary and gender representation.

### ***To be eligible for YAI membership an ECRII must:***

- 1** Have been awarded a PhD in any discipline within the past 10 years
- 2** Be normally resident on the island of Ireland at the time of application for membership.
- 3** Demonstrate the following:

**3.1 Research excellence:** The call is open to all ECRIIs who demonstrate a high level of excellence (interdisciplinary and practice-based research) in their discipline or research field.

This includes scholars working in any research-based discipline, including the natural, physical and social sciences, arts and humanities, or researchers working in private industry, the public and not-for-profit sector, or civil society organisations. The YAI welcomes applications from researchers from minority groups, new and emerging disciplines in academia, and researchers working in government, business, and non-governmental sectors.

**3.2 Research impact:** Applicants must demonstrate the impact of their research on the higher education sector, public policy, or wider society.

**3.3 Commitment:** Members join for one term of 4 years (extensions can be granted for career breaks, e.g., for caring responsibilities). The YAI will be an active organisation, and being a member requires a time commitment on each member's part. Members are expected to commit fully and be active participants in the Young Academy activities and projects including attendance at the YAI Annual General Assembly and participation in one or more of the organisation's priority areas.

**3.4 Inter-disciplinary or international collaboration.** The YAI will seek to work across disciplines and internationally. Applicants will be expected to be able to demonstrate experience in these areas.



# VII

## Membership term

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Membership in the YAI is for a single non-renewable four-year term: extensions can be granted for career breaks, e.g., for caring responsibilities.

The YAI is committed to observing the principles of integrity and good research practice. Membership may be revoked if a member engages in misconduct or if a member violates the principles of the YAI.



# VIII

## Membership selection committee

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The membership selection committee will be responsible for selecting the first cohort of YAI members. It will be a time-bound committee to select the first cohort of members only. The YAI Executive Committee will decide new membership selection procedures for subsequent cohorts of YAI members. The membership selection committee will be made up of nine representatives nominated as follows:

- **4 members of the Royal Irish Academy** nominated by the PRIA
- **2 ECRIs** (nominated by IUA and THEA separately)
- **2 nominees from non-academic fields**, e.g., business, private sector, non-governmental sector.
- **1 nominee from the Irish Research Staff Association.**

The RIA staff member responsible for the YAI will provide the secretariat for the YAI Selection Committee.



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