



UNIC International Sustainability Leadership Autumn School

16th September - 7th October: Online

13th - 17th October 2025:
In person at University College Cork

Autumn School Programme



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Thank you for joining us at University College Cork for the inaugural UNIC International Sustainability Leadership Autumn School. We look forward to meeting you online and to welcoming you to Cork in October. Below you will find all the information you need in terms of key dates, times and location.

UCC Autumn School Contacts:

Dr Paul Bolger – School Convener – p.bolger@ucc.ie

Tanya Fitzgerald – School Facilitator – TFitzgerald@ucc.ie

Key Dates & Times:

4 x 2-hour online sessions

- Tuesday 16th September: 10am-12pm (GMT)
- Tuesday 23rd September: 10am-12pm (GMT)
- Tuesday 30th September: 10am-12pm (GMT)
- Tuesday 7th October: 10am-12pm (GMT)

One week in-person Autumn School at University College Cork

- Monday 13th October – Thursday 16th October: 9.30am – 5pm
- Friday 17th October: 9am – 1pm

Location:

Sustainability Institute, Ellen Hutchins Building, Lee Rd, Sunday's Well, Cork, T23 XE10 (Previously the Environmental Research Institute)



Course Description:

Urgent transformative action is needed to address the sustainability crises we are collectively facing such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource depletion. Beyond the requirement for radical technological and business innovations we need new forms of individual and collective leadership. Sustainability leaders are those who inspire and drive us towards a more sustainable world and have the competences to understand and tackle sustainability challenges under conditions of extreme urgency, rapid change, and uncertainty.

The focus of the UNIC International Sustainability Leadership Autumn School is on leadership skills and sustainability competences which complement the deep domain-specific knowledge acquired within academic disciplines e.g. systems thinking, futures thinking, sustainability values, societal impact, and interdisciplinarity. Within this Autumn School we will develop a “sustainability mindset” to think, plan and act with empathy, responsibility, and care for our planet. The Autumn School will also draw upon living laboratory methodologies for co-creation, critical reflection, and experiential learning developed and refined within the UNIC Centre for City Futures.

Competences and skills learned within the programme will be applied to a city-based challenge within Cork City. The theme of the 2025 Autumn School will be: “Walking and pedestrianisation for liveable, net zero cities”

Learning outcomes of Autumn School:

- Analyse, synthesise, and interpret complex problems across different domains and scales to solutions that address the environmental, social, governance, and economic aspects of sustainability
- Understand how to work across diverse stakeholder groups showing empathy when collaborating with others
- Understand futures thinking approaches and methodologies to envision and craft “rich pictures” for preferred sustainable futures
- Collectively design and implement interventions, transitions, and transformative governance strategies to become an agent of change for sustainability
- Be able to map, reconcile, and negotiate sustainability values and principles as applied to planet and society and reflect on own values
- Articulate the concept and practice of sustainability as it relates to the self, community, your research, and the wider world
- Deepen awareness of individual leadership style and identify areas for growth

Date	Topic	Speakers
<p>Tuesday, September 16th 10am-12pm</p> <p>MS Teams Link</p>	<p>Understand</p> <p>Introduction to Autumn School and overview of leadership for sustainability competences</p> <p>Systems thinking competence: Complexity and systems thinking in the context of cities</p>	<p>Dr Paul Bolger, University College Cork</p> <p>Dr Lasse Gerrits and Dr Sofia Pagliarin, Erasmus University Rotterdam</p>
<p>Tuesday, September 23rd 10am-12pm</p> <p>MS Teams Link</p>	<p>Value</p> <p>Ethics, justice and values in the sustainability transition</p> <p>Cultural representations of leadership at times of eco-crises</p>	<p>Dr Anders Melin, University of Malmö</p> <p>Anna Kowalcze-Pawlik, University of Lodz</p>
<p>Tuesday, September 30th 10am-12pm</p> <p>MS Teams Link</p>	<p>Imagine</p> <p>Imagining and co-creating futures</p>	<p>Prof Per-Anders Hillgren, University of Malmö</p> <p>Ciara O'Halloran, University College Cork</p>
<p>Tuesday, October 7th 10am-12pm</p> <p>MS Teams Link</p>	<p>Collaborate and Act</p> <p>Citizen science and engaged research for high impact sustainability outcomes</p> <p>Knowledge to action: Ensuring social impact</p>	<p>Diego Lopez de Ipiña Gonzalez de Artaza, University of Deusto</p> <p>Dr Gonca Ongan, Koç University</p>

Monday, October 13th, 2025, 9.30-17.00
Ellen Hutchins Building, Sustainability Institute

9.30-10.00	Welcome: Prof Brian O’Gallachoir, UCC Overview of Autumn School in-person programme: Dr Paul Bolger, UCC
10.00-10.45	Introduction to Centre for City Futures and CityLabs StoryMap challenge: Ciara O’Halloran, UCC
10.45-11.00	Tea/Coffee Break
11.00-12.00	Sustainable travel and movement through Cork City: Peter Medway, Cork City Council
12.00-13.00	Complexity and problem framing: Prof Edmond Byrne, UCC
13.00-13.45	Lunch
13.45-15.00	Systems thinking and storytelling workshop: Jennifer Ahern, UCC
15.00-15.15	Tea/Coffee Break
15.15-16.15	Reflective learning workshop: Dr Catherine O’Mahony and Dr David Nyaluke, UCC
16.15-16.45	CityLabs co-creation group Work
18.30	Pizza at Franciscan Well

¹ Please note that the activities and timings of the in-person programme may be subject to change before School commencement

Tuesday, October 14th, 2025, 9.30-17.00
Ellen Hutchins Building, Sustainability Institute

9.30-10.00	CityLabs co-creation group check-In
10.00-11.00	Pedestrian infrastructure planning: Prof Maja Ahac, University of Zagreb
11.00-11.15	Tea/Coffee Break
11.15-12.30	Values thinking workshop: Adam Greene and Dr Paul Bolger, UCC
12.30-13.30	*CityLabs city walk with community partners
13.30-14.15	Lunch
14.15-16.15	*Nature-based values workshop: Irene Ní Shúilleabháin and Topaz Lily Shrestha, UCC
16.15-16.45	CityLabs co-creation group work
17.00	*Walking classroom around Cork City: Dr John Barimo (optional)

***These workshops takes place mostly outside, so please dress appropriately for the weather on the day.**



Wednesday, October 15th, 2025, 9.30-17.00
Ellen Hutchins Building, Sustainability Institute

9.30-10.00	CityLabs co-creation group check-In
10.00-11.00	Walking, green spaces and nature: Dr Jakub Kronenberg and Dr Edyta Laszkiewicz, University of Lodz
11.00-11.15	Tea/Coffee Break
11.15-13.15	Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research workshop: Dr Evan Boyle and Ciara O'Halloran
13.15-14.00	Lunch
14.00-15.00	*Cork City walking data collection
15.00-16.00	Culture café conversations
16.00-16.30	CityLabs co-creation group work
19.00	Conference meal

***This workshop takes place mostly outside, so please dress appropriately for the weather on the day.**



Thursday, October 16th, 2025, 9.30-17.00
Ellen Hutchins Building, Sustainability Institute

9.30-10.00	CityLabs co-creation group check-In
10.00-11.45	Reimagining city futures workshop: Dr Paul Bolger, Ciara O'Halloran
11.45-12.00	Tea/Coffee Break
12.00-13.00	CityLabs Storymaps prototype development
13.00-13.45	Lunch
13.45-15.00	Team working with mentors and peer-to-peer feedback refining CityLabs Storymaps
15.00-15.15	Tea/Coffee Break
15.15-16.45	Preparation of Storymaps project presentation

Friday, October 17th, 2025, 9.00-13.00
Ellen Hutchins Building, Sustainability Institute

9.00-9.30	CityLabs co-creation group check-in and presentation set-up
9.30-10.30	Leading and acting for sustainability: Dr Paul Bolger
10.30-10.45	Tea/Coffee Break
10.45-12.15	CityLabs challenge solutions project presentations
12.15-12.30	Reflections and wrap-up
12.30	Close of school by Dr Jean van Sindereen Law
12.45	Lunch to go

UNIC Autumn School Organisation Team



School Convener
Dr Paul Bolger,
University College Cork



School Co-Convenor
Prof Brian Ó'Gallachoir,
University College Cork

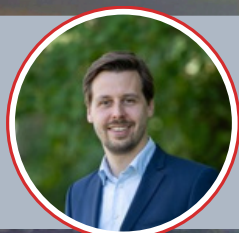


School Manager
Tanya Fitzgerald,
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UNIC CityLabs Manager
Ciara O'Halloran,
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UNIC Support Team

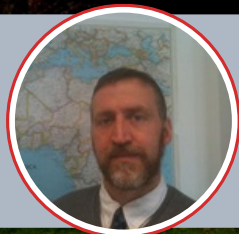


Mathias Reckman,
University College Cork



Aoife Dowling,
University College Cork

Local Authority Representative



Peter Medway,
Climate Action Coordinator,
Cork City Council



Prof Lasse Gerrits,
Erasmus University
Rotterdam



Dr Sofia Pagliarin,
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Dr Anders Melin,
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Dr Gonca Ongan,
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Dr Edyta Laszkiewicz,
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Dr Jakub Kronenberg,
University of Lodz



Prof Maja Ahac,
University of Zagreb



Prof Edmond Byrne,
Chair of Process & Chemical
Engineering



Jennifer Ahern,
PhD Researcher



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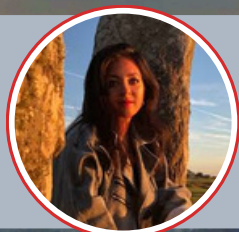
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