

ANNUAL NATIONAL ACCESS FORUM 2025

SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS



Dr Denise Frawley works in the Higher Education Authority (HEA) as a Senior Manager in Access Policy. The Access Policy unit is responsible for leading and monitoring the implementation of the National Access Plan 2022-2028. Prior to her current role, Denise worked as Head of Performance Evaluation and as a Data and Policy Analyst in the HEA. Before her time in the HEA, Denise worked at the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) in Education Research and on the Growing Up in Ireland study.



Dr Louise Callinan is Head of Access Policy with the Higher Education Authority (HEA), responsible for leading and monitoring the implementation of the National Access Plan 2022-2028. She has held various roles within the HEA, including as Head of Research and Research Policy, and as Director of the Irish Research Council. Prior to this, she was responsible for managing the higher education landscape reform process including the creation of technological universities and the associated national funding streams, and the implementation of the System Performance Framework.

Dr Jonathan Pratschke is a Social and Economic Research Consultant with more than two decades of experience conducting research projects on behalf of public organisations, both in Ireland and abroad, with particular focus on data management, statistical modelling, interpretation of results, and knowledge transfer to stakeholders. Dr Pratschke's recent projects include commissions from the Health Research Board, the Health Intelligence Unit, Pobal, and the HEA.



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Professor Stella Jones-Devitt is the Director of SEER (Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research) at Applied Inspiration, where she is responsible for providing strategic leadership and identifying opportunities for innovation and consultancy. Professor Jones-Devitt is a leader in critical pedagogic research and has extensive expertise in leading, designing, reviewing, and implementing evaluation research, working with organisations such as Advance HE, QAA UK & QAA Scotland, and the HEA. She has also held positions at several higher education institutions, most recently as Professor of Critical Pedagogy at Staffordshire University.



Dr Antony Aleksiev is Head of Development and Innovation at SEER (Specialist Evidence, Evaluation and Research), with responsibility for coordinating research projects focused on access initiatives and evaluation methodology. Dr Aleksiev also leads the development of novel models and instruments used to assess the impact of programmes intended to enhance education equity and participation. He is widely recognised for his innovative approaches and expertise in quantitative and statistical analysis.

Mr James Lawless is the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science. He was appointed to this role on 23 January 2025. Before this, he served as Minister of State at the Department of Transport with special responsibility for International and Road Transport and Logistics, and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications with special responsibility for Postal Policy.

