

# Meet the Graduates

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**Physics graduates from NUI Galway have pursued a variety of satisfying and lucrative careers in industry and in scientific research. Here's what they have to say about their studies at Galway and their work today.**

## **Museum Curator**

Alison Boyle (pictured right) (BSc 1998 NUI Galway), Curator of Astronomy & Modern Physics at the Science Museum, London: "I'm responsible for interpreting a world-leading historical collection and ensuring it is kept up to date with the latest major developments. My physics training comes in particularly useful for understanding and interpreting 20th and 21st century science, especially when I have five minutes to get my head around a major space science story before talking about it on the TV news!"

## **Astrobiologist**

Dr. Jacqueline Keane, Assistant Astronomer, University of Hawaii/NASA Astrobiology Institute (BSc 1996, MSc 1997 NUI Galway): "I've always been fascinated by space science. People I meet here in Honolulu always ask me where I come from, and astronomy lets us ask the same question on a bigger scale. Where did we all come from? How did water, which is essential for life, come to be on earth? We're analysing how other planets develop, and looking at how life-bearing molecules from space end up in comets and on planets, to understand more about how earth developed. It's a very unique feeling, peeling back the veil from these things."



## **Professor**

Professor Brian MacCraith, Director of the Biomedical Diagnostics Institute, Dublin City University (BSc 1978, PhD 1982 NUI-Galway): "I first became fascinated by lasers, light and colour during my undergraduate physics degree, and I was intrigued by how these technologies could be applied. What's so satisfying about my work now is the use of light, to detect and enable the early treatment of disease, such as cancer or cardiovascular disease. The new knowledge that research reveals is always satisfying, but it's even more exciting to see the fruits of your research efforts translated into platforms that tackle real-world problems."



## **Financial Analyst**

Owen Hassett, Financial Analyst with Bank of Ireland (BSc 2004 NUI Galway): "A lot of businesses now are looking for physics graduates because they have a totally different mindset. When you study physics you're problem solving the whole time, you're taught to think outside the box and to be analytical. That's a real benefit in jobs like mine, where I'm using statistical and analytic abilities to look at the stock markets."





### **Meteorologist**

Jerry Scully, Meteorologist with Met Eireann (BSc 1973, MSc 1975 NUI Galway): “Skills acquired during my degree course, such as information handling, problem solving, logical thought and clear communication help me greatly in my daily work as a meteorologist. Sophisticated atmospheric models and powerful computers are invaluable in this work, but there is still a significant human contribution from the experienced forecaster.”



### **Patent Examiner**

Orla Feeney, Patent Examiner, European Patent Organisation (PhD 2001 NUI Galway): “Technical qualification and competence is certainly vital in my job, but equally important is the ability to understand and use language in its broadest sense. It is important to think of the full impact of language when defining a device in terms of technical features. Part of what makes a device patentable is its novelty over the prior art, and that novelty may depend on the language used to define the novel feature. For a physicist who, like me, has a love of language, this is a great job.”



### **Engineer**

Aiden Flanagan, Principal Development Engineer, Boston Scientific Corporation (PhD 1994 NUI Galway): “My work here in R&D involves brainstorming, experimentation, prototyping and testing of new technologies that could be used to make medical devices. I think a physics degree is excellent preparation for research and development. It trains your mind to be inquisitive... it makes you question and find out the fundamental principles of new technologies or phenomena.”



### **Business Consultant**

Edel Lynch, Senior Manager, Accenture (BSc 1995 NUI Galway): “I love the variety of consultancy – the opportunities to work with different organisations and people, to travel, to be involved in interesting and challenging work. Many of the projects we do can be complex, but that’s the thing about being a physics graduate – you’re not scared of unfamiliar territory. You figure, ‘If I can get my head around quantum mechanics, I can understand these real-world business problems.’ Physics graduates do very, very well in my company.”

