



British Council Ireland

**A Year in Pictures
2024-2025**

The British Council supports peace and prosperity by building connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and countries worldwide.



British Council

We combine the UK's deep expertise in arts and culture, education, and the English language; our global presence and relationships in over 100 countries; our unparalleled access to young people and influencers; and our creative sparkle.

- We work directly with individuals to help them gain the skills, confidence and connections to transform their lives and shape a better world in partnership with the UK. We support them in building networks, exploring creative ideas, learning English, attaining a high-quality education and gaining internationally recognised qualifications.
- We work with governments and our partners in the education, English language and cultural sectors, in the UK and globally. Together, we make a bigger difference, creating benefits for millions of people worldwide.
- We work with people in over 200 countries and territories and are on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2024–25, we reached 600 million people.

Vision by 2027-28

British Council Ireland will move to strengthen the bilateral relationship in Arts and Education between Ireland and the UK.

We will act as a valued broker and convenor, building connections, creating opportunities, collaborations, and networks to support greater trust, understanding and respect between people in the UK and Ireland, working towards a more inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous future on these islands.



Overview of Activities

This overview covers activities from April 2024 to March 2025.

It has been arranged in our key sectors of activity:

- Arts and Culture
- Higher Education
- Non-Formal Education

It also includes information on our activities in English Language Education and Exams.



Culture Connects

British Council's Culture Connects programme supports UK cultural professionals, and organisations connect with their counterparts in Ireland through networking, collaboration, showcasing, and touring. It aims to build knowledge of the local creative industries sector while sharing digital arts packages with key stakeholders.

The main strands of Culture Connects activity in Ireland are:

- Cultural professionals brokering and connecting
- Showcasing and touring
- Creative collaboration
- Scoping and research
- Digital showcasing

The following pages highlight some of the exciting activities in Culture Connects in Ireland over the last 12 months.



Connecting Cultural Professionals

International Literature Festival, May 2024

British Council Ireland was thrilled to bring T. S. Eliot Prize-winning poet, musician and novelist Anthony Joseph to Ireland for the [International Literature Festival](#), where he hosted two events inspired by [Speaking Volumes'](#) project [Breaking Ground Ireland](#). [Breaking Ground](#) showcases works by over 90 writers and illustrators from ethnic minority backgrounds on the island of Ireland.

ULYSSES European Odyssey, June 2024

ULYSSES European Odyssey spanned two years and 16 countries, producing artistic responses in public spaces to social and cultural themes identified in the 18 episodes of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. British Council Ireland supported the project as it travelled to Dublin for the [Grand Arts and Society Symposium](#).

Weft Studio, Dublin Fringe Festival, August 2024 - January 2025

For the second time this year, British Council Ireland was proud to be a partner of [Weft Studio](#), a Dublin Fringe Festival initiative focusing on talent development and network-building for emerging and early-career Black artists and artists of the global majority. The programming was led by award-winning writer and creative producer Shannon Yee, with interventions from national and international mentors.



TAIGH/TŪ/TEACH, September 2024

Alongside the Scottish and Welsh Governments in Ireland, we supported TAIGH/TŪ/TEACH, a tri-lingual, site-specific production that was shown in Ionad na Dromoda, County Kerry (9th - 14th February); Nant Gwrtheyrn, Wales (21st - 24th February); and Grinneabhat, Scotland (30th January - 1st February). In celebration of the European Day of Languages, we co-hosted a premiere screening and panel discussion in September 2024 that explored linguistic diversity and the shared challenges of housing in rural Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In September 2025, we won a Business to Arts Award for our work.

Agreement at Dublin Theatre Festival, October 2024

British Council Ireland partnered with The Gate Theatre and the British Embassy in Dublin to deliver three post-show Gate Conversations panel discussions inspired by Agreement, a Lyric Theatre Belfast production by Owen McCafferty, which depicts events surrounding the Belfast Agreement in 1998. The production was brought to Dublin as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival 2024 after award-winning runs in Belfast and New York.

BETA Festival, November 2024

As part of British Council Ireland's ongoing commitment to connecting the UK and Ireland in culture and the arts, we partnered with BETA Festival once again in 2024 to support emerging digital arts in Ireland through the inward mobility of key high-level individuals involved in arts technologies in the UK. These included practitioners Kay Watson, Mike Stubbs, Nicola Triscott and Nimrod Vardi.



Dublin International Film Festival, February 2025

British Council Ireland partnered with Dublin International Film Festival on a special panel discussion, “Sustainability Through Festivals: A Collective Approach”, hosted by Megan Best from Native Events and Julie's Bicycle Europe. This insightful panel looked at how festivals can drive sustainable practices by uniting venues to enhance sustainable production and operations. We supported the mobility of panellist and UK sustainability expert Hannah Cox.

Culture Connects Reception & Performance, March 2025

We partnered with the British Embassy in Dublin on Culture Connects: Lives Entwined, a reception and performance that took place at the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA) and brought together key figures from government, arts, culture, and higher education. The event was a celebration of the ongoing relationship between the UK and Ireland, highlighting the power of cultural exchange and collaboration across borders.



Culture Connects Webinar, March 2025

We hosted an online webinar to discuss key findings and reflections from exciting new research commissioned by British Council Ireland, Culture Connects: mapping UK Ireland arts & cultural connections. Researchers Jane Morrow and Amberlea Neely of Starling Start presented findings and reflections from the report, and were joined by Rehana Mughal, British Council Director of Creative Economy. The session was hosted by Dr Kerry McCall Magan, British Council Ireland Country Director. The published report is available here (britishcouncil.ie/programmes/arts/cultural-mobility-and-connection-ireland-and-four-nations-uk)

Five Films for Freedom, March 2025

British Council's annual online programme of short films, in partnership with BFI Flare: London LGBTQIA+ Film Festival, celebrates global stories in support of LGBTQIA+ communities across the world. The five films were being streamed globally for free over 12 days.



Other activity includes:

Chariots of Fire Screening, July 2024

British Council Ireland collaborated with the British Embassy in Dublin to bring a screening of the British film 'Chariots of Fire' (1981) and a discussion with its producer Lord David Puttnam and Irish Olympian and presenter David Gillick in celebration of the Paris Olympics 2024.

Canopy, July 2024

Canopy: A Short Symposium on the Irish Family Home was funded by the British Council's International Collaboration Grant. Selina Thompson Ltd hosted this one-day symposium for Artists, Activists, Architects & Adoptees, Adopters and Foster Carers at Axis Ballymun, in Dublin.

Irish Street Arts, Circus and Spectacle Network (ISACS), August 2024

For its first Irish edition, British Council Ireland supported the mobility of Northern Irish multidisciplinary, queer and neurodivergent artist Ashton to attend ISACS' DIVE#3.

Unlimited Festival, September 2024

British Council Ireland were delighted to support Louise Costelloe (Dance Ireland) and Padraig Naughton and Adrian Colwell (Arts & Disability Ireland) to attend Unlimited Festival, which celebrates the artistic vision and creativity of disabled artists,

Architecture on the Edge Festival, September – October 2024

British Council-supported architect, artist and journalist Marko Milovanovic hosted a round-table discussion as part of his project "Beyond Influence" at Architecture on the Edge Festival, in Galway.



Puttnam Scholars Programme, October 2024

To celebrate its fifth anniversary, the Puttnam Scholars met for the first in-person event in October 2024, followed by a celebratory event co-hosted by British Council Ireland and the British Embassy in Dublin.

Outburst Queer Arts Festival, November 2024

We supported visual artist, diversity, equity and inclusion advocate and writer Pradeep Mahadeshwar to attend Outburst Queer Arts Festival in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Each year, the British Council supports the festival in inviting international delegates and programming international artists.

British Council Literature Seminar, November 2024

We were delighted to support Simon O'Connor, Director of the Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI), to attend British Council's Literature Seminar at Colonia Nova in Berlin.

CoMUSEUM International Conference, December 2024

Three delegates from the ULYSSES European Odyssey project, Seán Doran, Liam Browne and Gülen Güler, were supported by British Council Ireland to take part in the 14th CoMUSEUM International Conference in Athens, Greece. This year's theme was Museums and Trust.

Celtic Connections, January – February 2025

We supported Juno King, Irish producer and curator at South Wind Blows, to take part in folk, roots and world music festival Celtic Connections' 2025 Showcase Scotland.



Higher Education

The British Council's Higher Education program aims to create educational opportunities around the world through partnerships and dialogue with policy makers, academics, researchers, and students.

Higher Education is key to building and maintaining enduring relationships between people of the UK and other countries. Within the large portfolio of global programmes in Higher Education, we focus on International Student Mobility and Marketing, Education Insights and Engagement, celebration of Alumni and networks.



Higher Options, September 2024

Higher Options provides a unique opportunity for up to 30,000 students from across Ireland to speak with representatives from third-level institutions from Ireland, the UK, Europe and further afield. British Council Ireland joined several UK higher education institutions in highlighting the benefits and opportunities available to Irish students in the UK higher education space. In 2024, 27 UK universities attended the Higher Options student Recruitment Fair. We also updated and disseminated our annual Common Travel Area Higher Education Information Guide.

International Education Programme: Wales Study Visit, February 2025

We partnered with the British Council International Education Programme Unit to support nine Welsh school teachers and local authority stakeholders to engage in a study visit to Ireland as part of the International Education Programme. The visit's focus was on how the Irish DEIS (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) programme addresses disadvantage and promotes inclusion, exploring practical approaches and a whole-school strategy for supporting pupils from low socio-economic backgrounds.



Universities UK International Delegation Visit, March 2025

We partnered with Universities UK International (UUKI) to support an inward delegation of 10 to 15 representatives from UK universities to Ireland to meet with Irish research counterparts and engage with key research-focused stakeholders under the auspices of re-engagement under Horizon Europe. British Council Ireland worked with the British Embassy in Dublin and the British Irish Chamber of Commerce to organise the UUKI delegation visit.

UK Ireland Alumni Reception, March 2025

British Council Ireland and the British Embassy in Dublin hosted a second UK-Ireland Alumni Reception in March 2025 at the Embassy. The event was a networking reception to celebrate the rich and long-standing relationship between Ireland and the UK in higher education and showcase notable individuals in Ireland who completed an aspect of their higher education in the UK, across a range of sectors.



Non-Formal Education

The Youth Connects programme aims to connect young people with government, civil society, businesses and institutions to address various contemporary crises. This includes climate change, employment issues, social disconnection, conflict resolution and more. The programme offers a variety of activities, including focus groups, policy dialogue workshops, and networking opportunities.

The programme has four strands:

- Artificial Intelligence for the Common Good
- Climate Change
- Leadership for Gender Equality
- Social Cohesion



Tech for Humanity Workshop, November 2024

Building on the previous programme AI for the Common Good, Tech for Humanity aims to offer knowledge and skills to young people to envision a world where technology serves as a catalyst for positive change. Five training events took place from September to December 2024 in Cyprus, France, Greece, Ireland, and the UK. The Ireland Tech for Humanity event took place in the National College of Art and Design (NCAD) in November 2024. Young people were invited to explore technology strategies and AI's role in a range of societal challenges like sustainability. The winning team from the event was awarded a study visit to Edinburgh, which took place in April 2025.

COP29 Climate Negotiation Simulation Event, November 2024

On 19 November 2024, to coincide with the United Nations COP29 summit in Baku, Azerbaijan, British Council Northern Ireland hosted a COP29 climate negotiation simulation event in Belfast, Northern Ireland. We were delighted to partner with British Council Northern Ireland to support 6 students from 3 schools in Ireland to attend the event for the first time. The students joined over 100 other peers from schools in Northern Ireland for this special event which gave young people the opportunity to experience negotiating a climate deal.



Tech for Humanity Study Trip to Edinburgh, April 2025

The Irish delegation to Edinburgh consisted of 2 students who produced a winning video in the Tech for Humanity workshop in November. John Paul Dowling, Head of the Communications Department at NCAD, accompanied them. The teams visited relevant institutions and projects to draw inspiration and expand their knowledge of emerging technologies, and met the winning teams of all countries participating in the programme to exchange ideas and network. Participants also took part in a Youth Policy dialogue event on AI, emerging technologies, sustainability and social impact alongside a range of experts, including policymakers, researchers, companies, and academics.



English and Exams

·In Ireland the British Council deliver IELTS through 3 independent test centres (ITCs) operating in five locations across the country. These are managed by the British Council UK operation.

Our market split was 78% in 2023, growing to 87% in 2024. The overall IELTS market size increased 44% in 2023-24, but decreased by 10% in 2024-25.

The British Council earns a central management fee, which increases annually, for each IELTS – so in 2022 we earned £415k from IELTS in Ireland, whereas in 2023, we earned just over £609k, and in 2024 we earned £596k.

In Ireland, our other major activity is delivering ACCA (professional accountancy qualifications). In 2023-24, we ran 7,131 ACCA exams across Dublin, Cork, and Limerick – this increased to 7,846 in 2024-25.

For context, the British Council delivered 147,534 exams across the UK & Ireland in 2024-25, with Ireland contributing 10% of the total.



UK Ireland Map - Numbers and Activities

In 2024-25, we reached :

Students: 22,670

Education Leaders: 1,100

Artists: 319

Arts Leaders: 189

Community/CSO/NGO leaders: 76

Publication and Broadcast: 196,000

Website: 218,592

Social Media: 13,754

Online: 52,103

Face to Face: 8,004

Total 488,469



**For further information, please contact Country Director, Dr Kerry McCall Magan
Kerry.McCallMagan@britishcouncil.org**

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