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Minister Burton opens the 'Frontiers in Poverty Measurement' Summer School in the Geary Institute, UCD

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton TD, today (*Monday, 26th September 2011*) opened the week-long 'Frontiers in Poverty Measurement' Summer School in the Geary Institute, UCD. The Summer School is funded by the Department of Social Protection through its Social Inclusion Research Innovation Awards (SIRIA), which is managed on behalf of the Department by the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS)¹ as part of its *Research Development Initiative (RDI) 2010*. The aim of the SIRIA is to promote research excellence and innovation on poverty and social exclusion among third level institutions.

Minister Burton said: **"In the current economic climate, it is essential to have good poverty measurement techniques as well as robust data and evidence from poverty research, helping us to know what to target, when and how to ensure that the most vulnerable are protected. The Summer School is timely and relevant as it will help participants, including both early-stage researchers as well as relevant personnel from public sector bodies and NGOs, gain an in-depth knowledge on these issues."**

The 'Frontiers in Poverty Measurement' Summer School is led by Chris Whelan and involves other UCD staff including Brian Nolan; the ESRI; NUI Galway and Queen's University Belfast. The summer school will explore the conceptual and methodological aspects of poverty research, as well as highlight some of the most critical emerging issues for Ireland.

The summer school is intended to significantly develop and enhance participants' understanding of the most important challenges in researching poverty, with particular emphasis on empirical evidence and methodological concerns. Participants will become familiar with the main data sources suitable for each of the thematic areas covered by the summer school, both national and comparative.

¹ The Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS) was established in 2000. With the support of the National Development Plan, the IRCHSS funds cutting-edge research in the humanities, social sciences, business and law with the objective of creating new knowledge and expertise beneficial to Ireland's economic, social and cultural development.



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In addition, qualitative methodological approaches will be introduced as a valuable complement to the main quantitative focus. Lecturers on the course are leading experts in the field from both Ireland and the UK, including David Gordon (University of Bristol), Brian Nolan, David Madden & Christopher T. Whelan (UCD), Bertrand Maître & Richard Layte (ESRI), Mike Tomlinson & Madeleine Leonard (QUB), Alan Barrett (TCD) & Thomas Scharf (NUIG).

Minister Burton also highlighted how supporting research excellence and innovation through the SIRIA allows for a longer-term focus, to examine the impacts of the economic recession into the future; to determine if current poverty measurement techniques are adequate over time, as wider societal, economic, political and cultural dynamics change; to provide evidence e.g. of good practice and latent or emerging policy questions; and to suggest potential solutions to these policy issues.

All material, including presentations, reading material and discussions from the 'Frontiers in Poverty Measurement' Summer School will be available on <http://www.ucd.ie/appsocsc/http://www.ucd.ie/appsocsc/news.htm/frontiersinpovertyresearchsummerschool/>.

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