



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

PhD studentship available: How do we make farming for nature affordable in Ireland?

We are seeking a highly motivated PhD candidate for a fully funded 4-year interdisciplinary project. The PhD student will be based in Trinity Business School, supervised primarily by Norah Campbell, Associate Professor of Business, Trinity Business School and co-supervised by Jane Stout, Professor of Ecology, School of Natural Sciences.

Project Background and Description

Farming and food production relies heavily on nature, our natural capital: sunlight, water, soils and a wide range of organisms ensure crops and livestock are healthy and grow, as well as regulating climate, nutrient and water cycles to enable future production, and creating landscapes that enhance our wellbeing. However, natural capital is being depleted, and one of the main drivers is intensification of agri-food practices. Our economic models exclude externalities, and the perceived lack of value of nature has led to its destruction and degradation. At the same time, increased cost of living mean that farmers and consumers are struggling financially.

Although there are several projects underway to restore nature on farmland, there are significant gaps in our understanding of how to develop a farming system that is both good for nature and affordable (for the farmer, consumer, and government). This PhD brings together natural and socio-economic capitals concepts to address:

1. Where profitable activity occurs in Irish food production systems,
2. How subsidies can be used to support environmentally-friendly systems,
3. Measuring and valuing economic, natural and psycho-social capitals in agri-food systems.

Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate will:

- Hold a Bachelor and Master's degrees in any combination of the following: (health) economics, political economy, value chains, agriculture, commercial determinants of health, food engineering, data analytics, ecology, environmental science, or another related discipline.

- Be actively interested and involved in some aspect of food, ecology, farming, agroecology.
- Have demonstrable skills in data handling, analysis and research.
- Have the ability to apply multidisciplinary techniques to address hypothesis-driven questions.
- Work well in a multi-disciplinary team, and be able to work independently
- Meet the Trinity postgraduate entry requirements.

Funding

This is a 4-year PhD project funded by the Trinity Research Doctoral Award Scheme and covers an annual tax-free stipend of €25,000, and student fees.

Application procedure

Please send a CV and a 1-2 page personal statement detailing your interest in the project to Norah Campbell NCAMPBE@tcd.ie by 12th January 2026.

Your CV should include the name and contact details of two references. In your personal statement, please explain both why you are specifically interested in this PhD project and why you are a strong candidate to undertake it:

Interviews will take place (online) during the week beginning 26th January.

Project start date March 2026

Please send all inquiries to Dr Norah Campbell NCAMPBE@tcd.ie.