



Fostering Long-Term Farm Resilience: Understanding Behavioural Drivers of Climate Adaptation in Irish Agriculture

Walsh Scholars Reference Number: 2026008

University: Dublin City University (DCU)

Funding: Teagasc

Research Institution: Teagasc

Location: Teagasc Ashtown, Dublin 15

Proposed Start Date: September 2026

Project Summary

Climate change poses growing challenges for Irish agriculture, yet a substantial proportion of farmers remain uncertain about its relevance to their own farms, and long-term adaptation is often not prioritised. While climate impacts are expected to intensify, many responses remain reactive rather than proactive, potentially limiting future farm viability. Adaptation is influenced not only by climate events, but also by social and psychological factors, and there is currently limited understanding of how these processes develop over time within the Irish farming context.

Climate change is characterised by uncertainty, meaning that long-term adaptation benefits may be perceived as less immediate or motivating than short-term outcomes. Although higher perceived risk can encourage adaptive action, it can also lead to disengagement when farmers feel a lack of control, increasing the likelihood of avoidance behaviours becoming entrenched under mounting pressures.

This PhD project will examine how farmers' willingness to engage with, or disengage from, climate adaptation evolves over time in response to climate events, policy influences, perceived and actual risks, and behavioural factors including values, resilience, and psychological flexibility. The research will generate insights to inform tailored policy design, knowledge exchange, and advisory approaches, supporting more resilient, proactive, and sustainable adaptation at farm level.

Supervision

The project will be supervised by Dr Mohammad Mohammadrezaei (Teagasc Climate Centre) and co-supervised by Dr Emma Delemere (School of Psychology, Dublin City University). Dr Mohammadrezaei's research focuses on behavioural studies of farmer decision-making related to climate adaptation and mitigation, while Dr Delemere brings expertise in behavioural science and pro-environmental behaviour change. Together, the supervisory team provides complementary applied and academic expertise aligned with the project's focus on farm-level climate adaptation.

Research Environment

You will be registered at Dublin City University and based within the Agri-Food Business and Spatial Analysis Department at Teagasc Ashtown Food Research Centre, a leading centre for social and behavioural science research in agriculture, for the duration of our studies.

The department plays a central role within the Teagasc Climate Centre, applying advanced behavioural and spatial analysis approaches to understand farm-level climate adaptation and mitigation behaviours. The Climate Centre coordinates climate and biodiversity research across Teagasc and aligns with the Signpost Programme, supporting evidence-based policy development and knowledge transfer to increase adoption of mitigation and adaptation practices at farm level.



As a Walsh Scholar, you will benefit from engagement with national and international research networks, interdisciplinary collaboration, and regular seminars across social science, agriculture, and climate research.

This project offers opportunities for engagement with farmers, advisors, and policymakers, and for contributing to **policy-relevant research** on climate adaptation and resilience in agriculture.

Career and Training Opportunities

The Teagasc Walsh Scholars Programme provides a structured four-year training and development framework designed to support both academic excellence and long-term career readiness. Scholars develop advanced scientific and analytical expertise alongside transferable skills in communication, project management, and stakeholder engagement through expert-led training, workshops, and tailored professional development.

Opportunities are provided to present research at national and international conferences, supporting professional networking and active engagement with the wider research community. Dedicated final-year career supports focus on preparing scholars for impactful roles across research, industry, advisory services, and policy, in Ireland and internationally.

Through the Teagasc International Training Awards, scholars may undertake an international research placement of up to 12 weeks aligned with their PhD project. Outstanding achievement may also be recognised through the Walsh Scholars of the Year and Gold Medal Awards.

Candidate Profile and Eligibility

Applicants should ideally:

- Hold a First- or Second-Class Honours degree or an MSc in Psychology, Behaviour Analysis, or a related social science discipline, including agricultural extension, agricultural economics, human geography, psychology, sociology, or a related field.
- Demonstrate an interest in sustainable agriculture and climate adaptation
- Show the ability to apply mixed-methods, multi-actor behavioural research approaches
- Possess excellent written and verbal communication skills and the ability to work effectively as part of a team
- Be willing to engage in fieldwork and interact with farmers, advisors, and policymakers
- Hold a full, clean driving licence valid in Ireland, or be willing to obtain one
- Meet DCU postgraduate entry requirements, including English language requirements where applicable

Funding Details

This is a fully funded four-year PhD funded by Teagasc, including:

- €25,000 annual stipend
- University fees covered up to €6,000 per annum

How to Apply

Applicants should complete the [online application form](#) by **5:00pm on Wednesday, 18 March 2026**. Applications must include a curriculum vitae and a 1–2 page statement of motivation submitted as part of the online application.

Interviews

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview in early to mid-April 2026. Online interviews can be accommodated.



Further Information

Informal enquiries are welcome and may be directed to:

Dr Mohammad Mohammadrezaei – mohammad.mohammadrezaei@teagasc.ie

Further information on the Walsh Scholars Programme is available at:

<https://www.teagasc.ie/about/research-innovation/the-walsh-scholars-programme/about-the-programme/>