

NITheCS Colloquium

Monday, 22 November 2021, 16h00 – 17h00

Prof Jonathan Blackledge, Technological University Dublin, Ireland

“Knowledge Economies and the Future of Higher Education”

ABSTRACT



While the cost of higher education is rising, employers are complaining that graduates are increasingly unprepared for the workplace. One of the reasons for this is that the large majority of academics have little or no experience of industry and are therefore unable to move away from the superficial learning traditions of the past to the more in-depth technical training that is workplace oriented and employment focused. Consequently, many governments are now increasingly funding new and independent training centres that operate in close proximity with industry in order to supply the technical skills that universities are unable to provide.

This lecture explores the future of the university sector within the context of higher education and the knowledge economies of the future. It explores some historical themes associated with higher education in England and discusses the issues that lie behind the UK government’s current 2021 “Skills and Post-16 Education” Bill for skills improvement and technical qualifications in post-16 education.

BIOGRAPHY

Jonathan holds a BSc in Physics, a Diploma of Imperial College in Plasma Physics, a PhD in Theoretical Physics from London University and a Doctorate in Mathematics from the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. He has published 322 articles and books, 24 patents and technologies to license and supervised 72 PhDs.

After a career in the scientific civil service, academia, and industry, in 2008 he was appointed to the Stokes Professorship by the Science Foundation Ireland. With 30 years’ experience of research and development in defence related science and technology and the intelligence services, he retired from the Ministry of Defence as Colonel of Military Intelligence in 2019.

He holds Professorships with several research institutes and universities, including the University of Wales, the Institute of Advanced Studies at Warsaw University of Technology, the Technological University

Dublin, the University of Western Cape and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, where he was previously Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research.

He is currently directing research programmes focusing on Biosecurity (working with the UK Health Security Agency) and Decentralised Digital Economies (working with Smart Data and Assets Limited – portdex.com, where he is Director of Cybersecurity). He is a Fellow of Institutes and Societies which include the Institute of Physics, Institute of Mathematics and its Applications, Royal Statistical Society, British Computer Society, Institution of Engineering and Technology, Chartered Management Institute and the Institute of Directors.

In 2007, he was elected a Fellow of the City and Guilds London Institute for his contributions to vocational education, and, in the same year, elected a Freeman of the City of London for his contributions to Economics.

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