Application & Review Process – Walton Affiliate Positions

Document History

V0.1 – First Draft – KDoolin, SBalasubramaniam, JMahony
V0.2 – Revised to replace Affiliate with Affiliate - KDoolin

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Walton Institute for Information and Communication Systems Science is an evolution of the Telecommunications Software and Systems Group (founded in 1996) at Waterford Institute of Technology, and is the cornerstone of ICT research in Ireland's South East Region. From its early beginnings, engaging an EU research funded through FP5, to its involvement in National Science programmes which bolstered its fundamental science, through to its commercial success as a key industrial partner and producer of world class spin out companies, the Walton Institute has been central to technology based economic development in the region. This is further enhanced by its pivotal role in a regional ICT research and development ecosystem, for example through its co-location with the Arclabs Research and Innovation Centre in Carriganore and the New Frontiers (entrepreneurship) and CEDRE programmes therein. Beyond the region the Walton Institute fully aligns, and indeed contributes to, National research policies and programmes, whilst being at the forefront of multiple European programmes, projects and working groups.

A core element of the Walton philosophy is to engage in multi-disciplinary research, with ICT as a central focus, aligned with the Vision, Mission and Objectives (below). A critical element to that is the establishment of a cohort of Affiliate researchers that will engage with the Walton Institute across a range of research programmes. The Walton Institute has a program identified for bringing in Affiliate researchers in order to expand our multi-disciplinary research. The purpose of this is to enable a deeper engagement between the researchers in the institute and experts from multiple fields.

This document sets out the application and retention processes for Affiliate positions in the Walton Institute.

2 Walton Institute Mission and Objectives

2.1 Vision

To be an elite Research Institute that advances the role and science of ICT to benefit humanity, with an inter-disciplinary driven research vision that will benefit the advancement of the field of ICT, and will counter future emerging global challenges.

2.2 Mission

To be core to a unique ICT ecosystem that combines research and innovation through science, engineering and entrepreneurship that delivers real economic value to the long-term competitiveness of the South East and Ireland.

We envision that in 20 years, the Walton Institute, through its inter-disciplinary, breakthrough achievements, will be the impetus for a national cluster of leading research and industrial organisations, and will grow to staffing levels of over 200 people. The core motivation that is driving towards inter-disciplinary research is based on the impact that ICT has had on various industries. We seek to open up innovation through inter-disciplinary research that will pioneer the role of ICT in the health, transport, agriculture, industry/manufacturing, energy and TIME sectors, by strengthening and expanding our position as a global research, innovation and commercialisation leader in ICT. Besides the application of ICT to different industries, the other element of the inter-disciplinary goal of Walton Institute, is to redefine ICT using different disciplines. Traditionally, ICT has primarily been centered around the fields of Computer Science and Communication Networking and Engineering. However, in recent years we have seen influence from other fields that have played a role in progressing ICT, examples of which includes natural science (e.g. Bio-inspired computing), and humanities (e.g., social-inspired networking). However, to realize this, a platform in the form of research institute is required to allow different WIT (and international) faculties and schools to associate with the Walton Institute to develop collaborative research. The Walton Institute will provide an environment that will cultivate research for visionary scientists and technologists of the future, where they will be able to reach their full potential from an environment of like-minded researchers. This in turn will enable researchers to take ownership and full control of their research careers that will greatly increase their value within Irish and international research landscape, but also to become global leaders of the future.

2.3 Aims and Core Values

Walton Institute aims be a world-class research and knowledge provider, known for scientific and innovation excellence, for emerging ICT technologies in the region, Nationally, and Internationally, through a number of core values:

- **Excellence**: We strive for research and development excellence through creativity, professionalism and leadership.

- **Creativity:** We foster a pioneering spirit of enquiry and intellectual curiosity.

Walton Institute will be recognised as an innovative environment that fosters research, which offers a culture that promotes autonomy and the pursuit of individual interests and ideas. Researchers will have the opportunity to explore their own creativity and work on cutting edge technologies across a variety of challenging projects, engaging and collaborating with like-minded people. Walton staff will exhibit the following core principles:

- **Pride**: We take pride in all aspects of the organisation and assume collective and individual accountability and responsibility for our valued economic and intellectual independence as an organisation.
- **Dignity and Respect:** We promote openness and integrity, in an atmosphere of inclusion, support, dignity, empowerment, and continuous improvement.

2.4   Objectives

We will advance[1] the Walton Institute mission through the following five strategic objectives:

- **Reputation:** Continuously developing the quality and reputation of Walton Institute's research, innovation and commercialisation so as to be recognised internationally as exceptional.
- **People**: Ensuring a sustainable organisation by fostering an environment that advances the careers of researchers and engineers, and in parallel training high calibre post-graduate researchers for Ireland.
- **Partnership:** Generate and foster critical partnerships and alliances, to grow our global network, through demonstrable scientific R&D excellence.
- **Collaboration:** To be the catalyst for the creation of a cluster of high-tech companies that employ highly-skilled people in the region, many of which gain their competitive edge through collaborating with, and utilising the scientific and engineering IP and facilities developed by Walton Institute's globally recognised researchers.
- **Impact:** To maximise socio-economic impact of our work within the region and Ireland and contribute towards advancing global scientific knowledge.

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[1] See KPIs detailed in Chapter 5.7

3 Affiliate Programmes

3.1 Driving multi-disciplinarity

In order to achieve a truly multi-disciplinary research environment, knowledge and expertise of different fields needs to be integrated into the Walton Institute. As an example, Figure 1 illustrates the types of relationships between the Walton Institute and WIT Schools, as well as topics that can be brought into the institute. Note this is an example only, and the Affiliate programme is open to individuals from across all Schools in WIT.
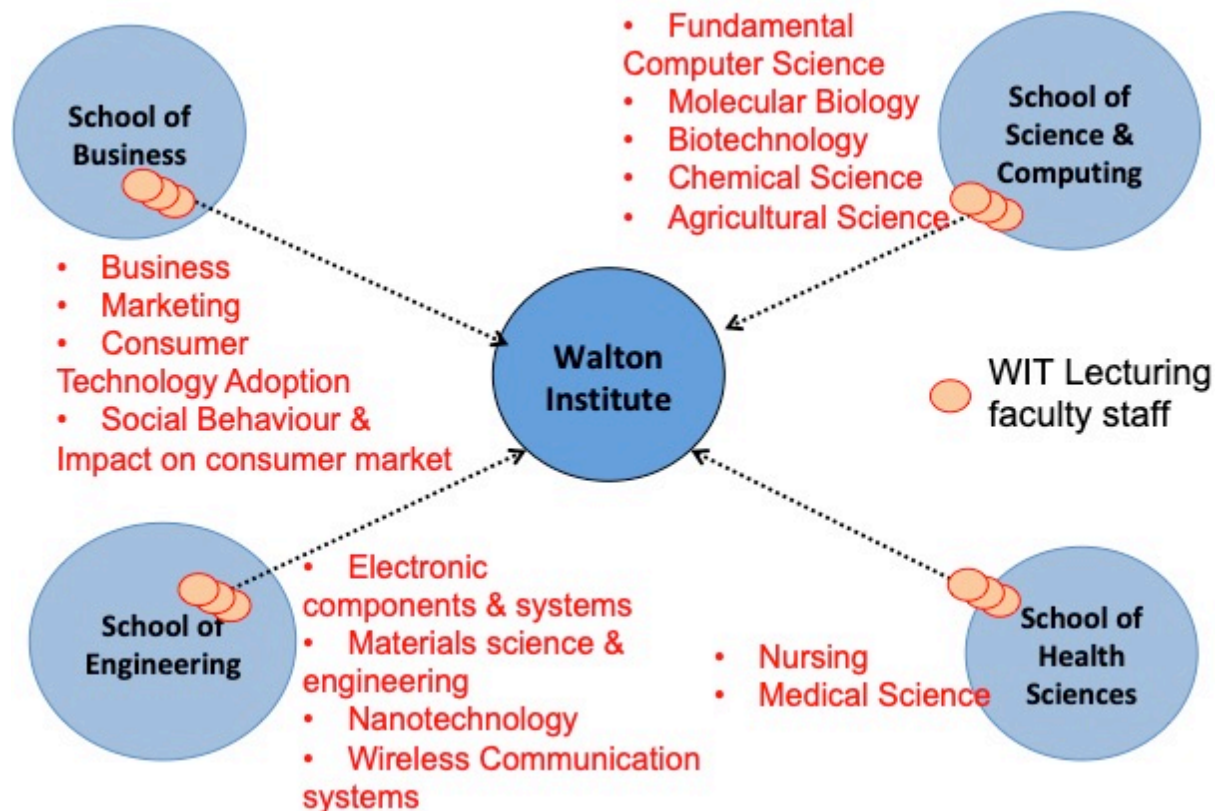

Figure 1 Relationship between WIT Schools and Walton Institute.

3.2 Who can apply?

The Affiliate program will be open to staff members from the different schools in WIT/ITC/TUSE. In parallel, for external collaborators, WIT has a more formalised Adjunct process.
The duration for each agreement will be for one year, and is renewable based on their performance in contributing to the Walton's research.

3.3 Why apply?

Affiliates will be allocated into a Research Division, where they will be able to contribute to, and get support on, research proposals. The Walton institute will support the Affiliate

researcher for proposal writing through a team of researchers within the research institute (note, this is subject to the research interests of the Research Division being aligned with the proposal(s) in question), and the obtained funding (and associated overheads) can be used by the Affiliate to either buy out hours from teaching within WIT or fund a postdoctoral research fellow of PhD student. Additionally, in certain cases a WIT staff member may be able to access a portion of EI Coordination Grants, or RFAM/Research Connexions funding to buy out time to undertake proposal work.

Flexibility will be provided to the Affiliate researcher to allow them to spend time within the labs and offices in the Walton institute to meet with researchers or students. Successful applicants will be given one of the titles below, and will be included on the Walton Institute website.

Title[2]	Description
Affiliate Assistant Researcher	Postgraduate researcher (e.g. PhD or Master's student).
Affiliate Research Fellow	Academic Staff member (with PhD or equivalent experience) undertaking joint research programmes with Walton.
Affiliate Senior Research Fellow	Academic Staff member (with PhD or equivalent experience) supervising students undertaking joint research programmes with Walton.
Affiliate Professor	Academic Staff member who is a Professor undertaking joint research programmes with Walton.

Table 1 Categories and definition of Affiliates

3.4 What does it mean to be an Affiliate?

The Affiliate programme is seen as a driving force within the Walton Institute. it is important that all Affiliates are committed to supporting the Walton's mission and vision.

As such, Affiliates are expected to:
- have an active joint research programme with one of Walton's Research Divisions.
- jointly (with Walton Institute staff) publish in high-ranking journals within their discipline and within the core disciplines of the Walton Institute at least one per year - and note affiliation to the Institute on all publications (whether joint, or funded via the Walton Institute)
- participate in joint grant proposals to the Walton Institute's major stakeholders (e.g. Enterprise Ireland, Science Foundation Ireland, European Union)

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[2] Note these titles do not imply a contractual agreement with the RI

- be actively involved in the Walton Institute through activities such as attending seminars, presenting research, liaising with Walton staff to encourage deeper engagement in WIT in general (facilitating guest lectures for example)
- update the Walton Affiliate Register with annual collaboration results (proposals written, projects started, publications)
- participate in Walton Institute dissemination and communication activities
- have a profile, with photo, on the Walton Institute website
- participate in preparation of the Walton Institute annual report

3.5   Walton Institute Commitment to Affiliates

The Walton Institute views the Affiliate programme as a two-way street. We are committed to supporting Affiliates in order to best leverage these relationships by:
- helping to identify common research programmes and associated funding streams
- allocating Walton Institute staff to work on joint funding proposals
- identifying targets for joint publications
- engaging in joint supervision of students
- providing office/working space within Walton Institute facilities

3.6   Applying to become an Affiliate

The aim of the Affiliate program is to enhance the research on specific thematic areas by collaborating with different individuals who bring in new perspectives and experience. At the same time, since Walton institute is a multi-disciplinary research institute, the Affiliate programs will help to strategically strengthen the knowledge base in fields beyond ICT.

3.6.1   Affiliate Invitations

In certain cases, staff within the Walton Institute may want to deepen their research relationship with specified individuals. To do this the Walton Institute staff member (proposer) will complete the Walton Affiliate Invitation Form (Appendix 1) and will submit to their Head of Division, the Walton Director of Research, and the Walton Executive Director for review.

Proposers are encouraged to view the thematic and specialist areas within the Walton Institute to see how their proposed Affiliate's research expertise will fit into a Research Division. Affiliate researchers are not limited to individuals who have research interests that are currently part of the existing thematic areas but can also nominate new areas they would like to introduce into the Walton Institute. This is encouraged as the Walton Institute is a progressive research institute that will continually evolve research and will continually explore new strategic areas.

Acceptance of Affiliate proposals will be at the discretion of the Director and will be based on a determination as to the fit between the proposed Affiliate and Walton's

research/strategic direction. Applicants may be asked to meet with the Director as part of this process.

3.6.2   Affiliate Applications

Individuals interested in joining the Walton Institute as an Affiliate will complete the Walton Affiliate Application Form (Appendix 2).

Applicants are encouraged to view the thematic and specialist areas within the Walton Institute to see how their research expertise will fit into a Research Division. Affiliate researchers are not limited to individuals who have research interests that are currently part of the existing thematic areas but can also nominate new areas they would like to introduce into the Walton Institute. This is encouraged as the Walton Institute is a progressive research institute that will continually evolve research and will continually explore new strategic areas.

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3.7   Affiliate Review Process

Reviews of Affiliates will be undertaken on a tri-annual basis (to take funding cycles into account). Rather than creating an onerous review process, and to encourage continued engagement, Affiliate title renewals will be based on the following lightweight criteria:
- Joint funding applications
- Joint funding secured
- Joint publications (1 per year)
- Supervised students on joint research programmes

If it is determined that an Affiliate has not secured results according to at least one of the criteria above a determination will be made as to whether the Affiliate position can continue.

Appendix 1 – Affiliate Invitation Template

Applications (with brief CV) to be sent to be sent by email.	
Invitation Proposed By	Name: Email:
Title	
Name	
Email	
Host Institution	

Name	
Country	
School / Department	

Web profile

Web Page	
ResearchGate (or similar)	
LinkedIn	
Other	

Requested Affiliate Title (see definitions above)

Affiliate Assistant Researcher	
Affiliate Research Fellow	
Affiliate Senior Research Fellow	
Affiliate Professor	

Area of Research Expertise

Top Five Publications

1	
2	
3	
4	

	5	
Current Funded Research (if any)	Funding Programme: Project Overview:	
Proposed linkage with Walton Institute Thematic Area(s)		
Expected Collaboration Outputs		

Appendix 2 – Affiliate Application Template

Applications (with brief CV) to be sent to be sent by email.

Title	
Name	
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Area of Research Expertise

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5	

Current Funded Research (if any)	Funding Programme: Project Overview:
Proposed linkage with Walton Institute Thematic Area(s)	
Expected Collaboration Outputs	

Appendix 3 – Affiliate Reporting Form

The online reporting form (accessible here) requires the following information:

Name	
Publication Secured?	*Details*
Funding Proposal Submitted?	*Details*
Project Started?	*Details*
Student co-supervised / graduated?	*Details*