

Dr Gerald Craddock

Dr Craddock is the inaugural Chief Officer of the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, a statutory body established by the Irish Government in 2007. It is part of the National Disability Authority which is the lead state agency on disability in Ireland. The Centre and its highly experienced team is focused on enabling the design of environments that can be accessed, understood and used regardless of age, size and ability. Key domain areas covered by the Centre are the built environment, products and services, and information and communication technologies (ICT).

The centre's focus is on infusing universal design into educational curricula at all levels, developing standards in professional and industrial services and creating awareness of the benefits of universal design within Ireland. The Centre's extensive website shows the broad coverage it provides in terms of both policy and practice to bridge the gap between "knowing and doing". The Centre has published a number of key documents for example in the built environment "Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach" provides comprehensive best practice guidance on how to design, build and manage buildings and spaces so that they can be readily accessed and used by everyone. The Centre has also commissioned a number of key projects, including "Shared Space, Shared Surfaces and Home Zones from a Universal Design Approach for the Urban Environment in Ireland" which explores contemporary national and international practices and thinking on Shared Spaces, Shared Surfaces and Home Zones from a Universal Design approach in the Irish urban environment. The centre are completing work in 2014 on national guidelines for Universal Design Homes and also new guidelines on Dementia friendly universal Designed family dwellings.

With strong links to Europe and with the European Union, the Centre's work extends to leading the revision of European and International Standards in the development of new universal design standards. In 2012 Dr Craddock was invited as an expert evaluator for the European Commission's research and innovation funding programme, the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7), the European Union's new €79 billion programme for research and innovation in Europe. He is also past president of the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE), an organisation that recognises the interdependence of universal design and assistive technology.

Prior to his role with the Centre, Dr Craddock managed a national assistive technology department, working with over thirty professionals. He has also headed up projects at both national and European level, with specific emphasis on technology in education and the development of services in the field of assistive technology.

Dr Craddock is a graduate of Dublin City University with an Electronic Engineering degree, a Postgraduate Diploma in Social and Vocational Rehabilitation Management from University College Dublin (UCD), and a PhD from the Centre of Disability Studies in UCD. He has published widely in peer reviewed journals as well as continuing as a visiting lecturer at the University College Dublin and the Dublin Institute of Technology.