



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Strengthening the link between research & policy

IGEES Annual Conference 2025

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Why is (economic) research important for policy?

We know far less than we would like to (or think that we might) e.g:

- What are the returns to further and higher education?
- What are the effects of making pensions enrolment automatic?
- What are the effects of increasing/reducing employer PRSI?

Economic research can provide quantitative answers using a powerful toolkit, including about the unintended consequences of policy

- Strong emphasis on causal inference since empirical turn in 1990s

Who does (policy-relevant) economic research in Ireland?

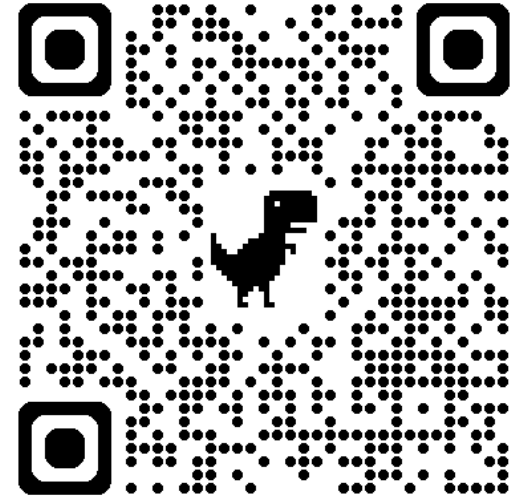
Mainly folk based at ESRI, Central Bank, universities & (some) think-tanks



Strengthening the link between research & policy

1. Set out the key areas of research for your Department/agency

- 2015 review of UK Research Councils recommended that the Government there provide documents that set out the most important research questions facing each department: collated at gov.uk page linked →
- e.g. UK Treasury doc details >100 Qs across 7 themes
 - Growth, Labour Market, Public Spending & Public Services, Financial Sector, International, Tax and Fiscal Policy
 - e.g. How effective are tax reliefs at achieving their stated objectives? Are reliefs passed through where that was the intention?



Strengthening the link between research & policy

2. Recognise the constraints that both researchers & policymakers face

e.g. Trinity junior workload = 40:40:20 for teaching : research: service

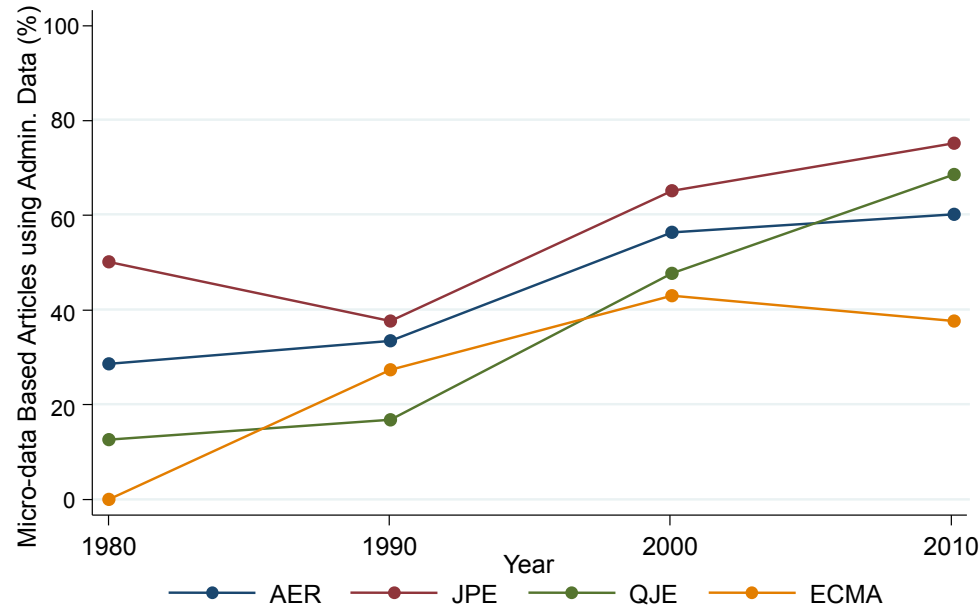
- Some recognition of policy contribution/impact via service category
- But things like submitting to a consultation rarely counts
- More likely to find willingness to contribute through advisory group or something else that is recognised by university

However, real currency for university-based researchers is publications

Strengthening the link between research & policy

3. Support/sponsor access to administrative data

Use of Administrative Data in Publications in Leading Journals, 1980-2010

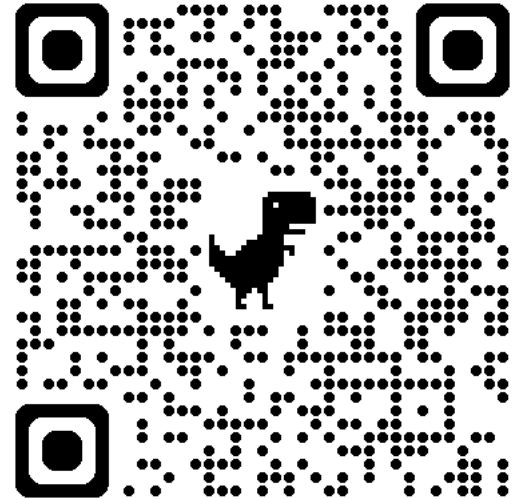


Note: "Administrative" datasets refer to any dataset that was collected without directly surveying individuals (e.g., scanner data, stock prices, school district records, social security records). Sample excludes studies whose primary data source is from developing countries.

How can we strengthen linkages?

4. Irish Public Economics Network (IPEN) as potential vehicle

- Developing register of economic researchers in IE with areas of research interest/expertise
- Plan to organise thematic events bringing together researchers and policymakers in an area (e.g. tax)
- Annual Irish Public Economics Workshop bringing frontier public economics research to Ireland
- Join the mailing list to keep up on these activities:
<https://publiceconomics.ie/maillinglist/> or QR code →





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Thank You

