

## Enda Howley

**Bio:** I am Associate Professor in Computer Science at the National University of Ireland, Galway and have been a member of academic staff since 2012. I was awarded a PhD from NUI Galway in 2009, and my external examiner was Professor Karl Tuyls. I lecture on a range of mostly AI related subjects including Agents, Multi-Agent Systems and Reinforcement Learning across a range of programmes. I have a Google Scholar H.Score of 24 and have published over 100 peer reviewed papers with the majority of these involving learning agents.

**Links to AAMAS:** Since attending the European Agents Summer School 2005 in Utrecht as a first year PhD student and almost all the subsequent AAMAS conferences, I've regarded the AAMAS community as my natural research family. I've established research links with numerous colleagues, simply from attending AAMAS, many of whom I regularly collaborate and visit. I organised the Adaptive Learning Agents (ALA) Workshop for a number of years and was subsequently invited to serve on the annual Senior Steering Committee (2017-Present). Helping to grow that workshop as a natural stepping stone for PhD students to engage with more experienced researchers at AAMAS in a friendly and social way was a major cornerstone of how that workshop has consistently grown to become an annual highlight for many who attend AAMAS. I have served for many years as an AAMAS PC Member and SPC member, and in 2021 I was honoured to be the Area Co-Chair for the learning track.

**Vision:** We are finally emerging from a difficult period for conferences and research where we were denied the opportunities to physically meet. The broader domain of AI is attracting more and more competing conferences, and therefore we face the challenge of ensuring that AAMAS remains at the very heart of our community. AAMAS must be the default conference that agent researchers wish to publish their best work, aim to attend, and in return receive high quality feedback and engagement on their work, while also having the opportunity to establish vital links to other researchers.

**PC & SPC Reviewers:** Researchers at all stages are facing many competing demands on their time, and our job must be to deliver a conference experience that is of immense value regardless of how anyone decides to contribute. The importance of high quality reviewing needs our highest priority, so we can continue to attract the best work from all corners of the globe. Reviewer's time needs to be recognised if we are to have their undivided attention and commitment, and we need to now consider how to provide some small token of recognition in appreciation for their expertise.

**Attendees:** When researchers attend our conference, we need to ensure they get maximum value from the experience. We have seen the benefits of online and virtual tools to assist with engagement, but we are now all too aware of their limitations. The value of meeting others during a talk, socially, or at a poster session needs to be strengthened so that attendees feel maximum personal value from attending. This requires even more emphasis on session scheduling and mechanisms to stimulate discussion among attendees. Intuitively clustering and categorising posters at strategic locations in tandem with session venues must be a key priority if we are to help add value. Greater encouragement and recognition for excellently communicated research is equally needed to showcase our work both inside and outside our AAMAS community.

Ultimately, we are not a collection of agents that happen to be part of AAMAS. We always remember, we are a community of people that appreciate a sense of connection and togetherness which is where the real value of AAMAS must always be recognised. Having an open, friendly and supportive environment at the AAMAS conference is hugely valuable to us all, and I aim to help deliver on that for our community over the coming years.