THE INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH INTO ORGANISATIONS, WORK AND EMPLOYMENT (iROWE)
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## Join iROWE / Study with us

Lancashire School of Business and Enterprise
WHAT WE DO

Our Institute for Research into Organisations, Work and Employment (iROWE) conducts research and engages with stakeholders to help build a fair and equitable future of work.

iROWE engages with organisations, trade unions, professional bodies and policymakers to inform the development of effective workplace practice and employment policy. iROWE has over 20 members and over 200 associate members including academics, HR practitioners, trade unions, local government and SMEs.

Dr Adrian Wright
Director of Institute for Research into Organisations, Work and Employment (iROWE).
Our research projects are inspired by two central research themes. They align with the Lancashire’s Local Industrial Strategy and UK government’s Industrial Strategy. Our themes are also central to the priorities of organisations that shape workplace practice and policy globally such as the International Labour Organisations (ILO) agenda for Work for A Brighter Future and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Equality and work**

This theme explores the worker’s personal characteristics and circumstances and the impact they have upon their working life including recruitment, progression, retention and exit. This theme considers differing experiences of work dependent on factors such as a worker’s caring responsibilities, gender, occupation, employment status and interactions in-between.

**Good and sustainable work**

This theme focuses on the quality of work and employment. It considers the impact of the changing world of work in the context of tensions around innovation, productivity and technological and organisational change. Our key areas of interest include, but are not limited to, working practices, enhancing employee voice, work in new and emerging spaces and health and wellbeing.
iROWE ENGAGEMENT

Seminars
We regularly hold seminars to engage with our community. Our seminars offer a platform for academics, practitioners and industry experts to share knowledge and stimulate informative and provocative discussions. Alongside speakers from iROWE we have recently welcomed guest speakers from Barclays, BAE Systems, Merseyside Police Crime Commission, The Women’s Organisation, the Women’s Equality Party, Unite the Union, the University of Glasgow and the University of Sheffield.

Conferences and Events
Our research reaches and informs diverse audiences. We regularly present at academic conferences including the International Labour Process Conference, the Gender Work and Organisation Conference and the British Sociological Association Annual Conference. We are often invited to speak at events, training and workshops held by organisations such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and the Trades Union Congress (TUC). We also share our research with regional and national policymakers, including the Lancashire Enterprise Partnership and the North West Labour Party.

Image: Jim McMahon MP with Dr Adrian Wright from iROWE
iROWE PROJECTS

Returning to Work

iROWE has been researching issues surrounding gender and employment in Lancashire. Responding to calls to address regional inequalities in employment, our research explores the challenges of individuals hoping to return to work and seeks to understand the HR issues surrounding returning to work. This research predominantly, but not exclusively, focuses on women returning to work after taking time out of employment due to caring responsibilities.

In-depth interviews with HR practitioners, employers and workers who have recently returned to employment after caring responsibilities reveal tensions around negotiating flexible work and reconciling individual work orientations with changing organisational priorities. We also found individuals that successfully return to work typically require strong personal relationships with managers or must demonstrate their capacity to accept alternative work conditions.

Our research aims to assist organisations and policymakers to develop effective ‘returning’ to work policies to enhance recruitment and retention at work.
Recognising Domestic Abuse as a Workplace Issue

Working closely with the TUC and trade unions, iROWE, alongside colleagues from Sheffield Hallam University, has been researching the impact of domestic abuse in the workplace. Our research found that trade union representatives and officers were a key source of support for both victims and survivors and organisations in helping them better handle workplace issues relating to domestic abuse; through, for instance, negotiating changes in work patterns and signposting victims and survivors to external support groups. However, the research also highlighted that much more needs to be understood about domestic abuse in a workplace context, and that there is an urgent need to raise awareness within all organisations.

The project has raised awareness and understanding of domestic abuse as a workplace issue and inspired others into taking action to support victims and survivors at work. For instance, to undertake new training, awareness raising activities, negotiating new policies or enhancing awareness of existing policies.
Coworking and Community

We are always interested in researching new workplace settings; recent iROWE projects explore work, social relationships and community in Coworking spaces.

From a position of relative obscurity, Coworking is a growing phenomenon. Emerging from the changing social, technological and cultural shifts in work, Coworking has been positioned as a new economic engine composed of collaboration and community, providing soft infrastructure for economic development by offering support for entrepreneurship and innovation. However, an alternative interpretation describes how Coworking responds to the isolation and insecurity of self-employment by the formation of a new workplace ‘community’.

Informed by working for three months in a Coworking space, our ethnographic research explores the benefits and unintended consequences of social support and community for self-employed workers. It considers how social relationships are formed and maintained, how informal economies emerge from Coworkers’ relationships and how Coworking spaces can be a site for collective action.
The Impact of the Preston Model

Working with colleagues in the UCLan Research Centre for Business, Management and Enterprise, this project assesses the impact and contribution that the Preston Model has on Lancashire’s Creative Industries.

This ongoing project examines the role of anchor institutions, including universities, in leveraging the development of the creative industries, thus utilising networks and ecosystems to support the creative economy. More specifically, iROWE researchers are examining how community wealth building can lead to increased employment opportunities and help in securing good and sustainable work for creative workers in Lancashire.

This project embraces the diversity of creative clusters by examining a creative sector outside the context of larger cities. It provides research into an initiative to support regional ecosystems, thus raising attention to policymakers and key stakeholders.
iROWE Research Evaluations

We also conduct evaluative research projects. Currently we are researching two SME business growth and development programmes.

The first examines the work experiences of self-employed workers and considers how business growth programmes stimulate collective and collaborative working. It also explores how participants manage their work-life balance and consider their challenges to maintaining ‘good work’. The second considers how capacity building and competitive capability interventions impact on productivity and the competitiveness of participating SMEs.
JOIN iROWE / STUDY WITH US

Become an associate member

If you would like to be part of this exciting institute and kept at the forefront of research then become an ASSOCIATE MEMBER for FREE. Benefits include: research e-newsletter, regular seminars by key speakers, consultancy opportunities for your organisation, and networking.

Please get in touch if

• You have any research ideas.
• You have any ideas for iROWE seminar topics.

Follow – @iROWEUCLAN
The iROWE twitter has all the latest information about research, awards and events.

Join – iROWEUCLAN
The LinkedIn account has a group where there are regular discussions with other iROWE connections.

Study with us

iROWE has expertise across a broad range of disciplines. iROWE offers a supportive and innovative environment for those wishing to pursue postgraduate research degrees and has a substantial array of expertise across the team. If you are interested in undertaking any postgraduate research degrees please contact irowereresearch@uclan.ac.uk