

AIT Future Jobs and Skills Event to Prepare Midlands for Transition to Circular Economy

We're moving into an era whereby design and production must fully respect reuse, repair and recycling needs - is the Midlands ready for it?

Athlone Institute of Technology will host a 'Future Jobs and Skills for a Circular Economy' event on Tuesday, 29th October with the goal of preparing the Midlands for Ireland's transition to a circular economy.

We're moving into an era whereby design and production must fully respect reuse, repair and recycling needs, and the value of products, materials and resources will be maintained in the Irish economy for as long as possible - is the Midlands ready for it?

Are there skills shortages in the repair, refurbishment and retail sectors that are blocking this transition? If so, what can be done to overcome these skill gaps?

Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Office, Chartered Institute of Waste Management and Community Reuse Network of Ireland are inviting members of the public to join them in asking these questions and in finding solutions.

The 'Future Jobs and Skills for a Circular Economy' event will highlight skills gaps in jobs and skills base needed for prevention, reuse and repair in Ireland – and determine what can be done to surmount them.

According to Dr Michael Tobin, Dean of Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning at Athlone Institute of Technology, the conference comes at an ideal time for the Midlands and Irish economy.

“The Irish economy has begun to organise itself around the circular economy - an area of particular relevance to Athlone Institute of Technology given our ongoing research in this area. This event will aid us in identifying many of the skills required, enabling us to develop innovative, flexible programmes capable of re-skilling and up-skilling those interested in working in this area. The net result is new business and working opportunities for the Midlands region and beyond,” Dr Tobin explained.

A leader in research and innovation, the Midlands-based institute ranks number one across the technological higher education landscape and addresses national and research priorities through

impactful knowledge creation and transfer.

Athlone Institute of Technology has made meaningful strides in plastics recycling research and development. It is currently spearheading a €5 million H2020 research project - Bio Innovation of a Circular Economy for Plastics (BioICEP).

Led by Dr Margaret Brennan Fournet, a lead researcher in Athlone Institute of Technology's Materials research institute and part-time lecturer in the faculty of Engineering and Informatics, the pan European-Chinese collaboration was formed to reduce the burden of plastic waste in the environment and involves 12 partners from eight countries.


The countries have been selected to represent different mixed plastic pollution environments, with specific partners selected which have the expertise and facilities to carry out the necessary technical innovations. A number of innovative booster technologies are at the core of this solution accentuating, expediting, and augmenting mixed plastics degradation to levels far in excess of those current achievable.


"The Future Jobs and Skills meeting will provide a platform for people to discuss current and future skills gaps that exist in reuse/repair as we transition to the circular economy, while also talking about education and training supports that are available to address these skills needs," John Costello, Midlands Regional Skills Manager, added.


The event is open to the public and will run from 9.30am to 1.30pm. It is sponsored by the Eastern Midlands Regional Waste Office, Chartered Institute of Waste Management and Community Reuse Network of Ireland. For more information and to register, [please click here \(https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/future-jobs-and-skills-for-a-circular-economy-tickets-70933230201\)](https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/future-jobs-and-skills-for-a-circular-economy-tickets-70933230201).


An educational powerhouse defined by a commitment to academic excellence, Athlone Institute of Technology has enjoyed considerable successes in the academic arena, most notably being named one of U-Multirank's 'Top 25 Performing Universities' in the world for interdisciplinary research the second consecutive year. Further solidifying its reputational prowess, the institute continues to enjoy the highest ranking nationally in the Irish Survey of Student Engagement – 69% versus 29% national average. These accolades build upon the institute's success in winning the Sunday Times Good University Guide 'Institute of Technology of the Year' award in 2018 and Runner Up award in 2017.

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